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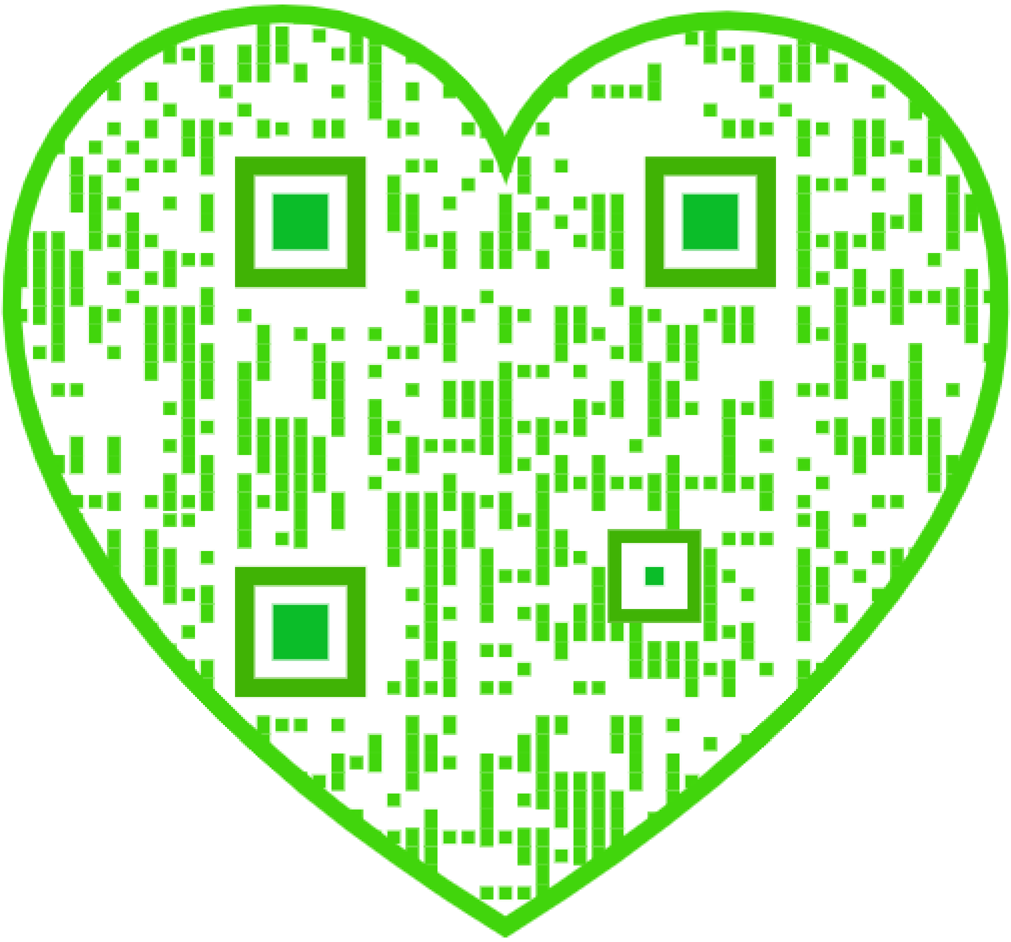

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BARGAIN HUNT

It hardly seems believable, but another year is waiting patiently to take us on an adventure. With this in mind, we asked marque experts to reveal what they consider to be the 'ones to watch out for' during 2025. Covering a range of different budgets, not to mention wildly contrasting Porsche designs, the results present a thought-provoking mix of Stuttgart-crested sports cars promising a huge amount of bang for your buck.

We've put our money where our collective mouths are. For example, in this issue, *911 & Porsche World* contributor, Richard Roberts, not only waxes lyrical about what an absolute bargain the 996-generation 911 continues to be, he reinforces the message by buying a 996 to call his own. Acquired at knockdown price, this black Carrera 4S goes a long way to demonstrating just how much Porsche is available to those working with a modest budget, especially if you don't mind getting stuck in with a bit of DIY servicing and maintenance. This is an important point — there's tendency to consider working on classic and modern-classic Porsches as some kind of dark art, but you'll be surprised at just how much work you can do on these cars with basic tools. It's something we're keen to promote and helps an owner to know their car better.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS
12 issues of *911 & Porsche World* are published per annum
UK annual subscription price: £104.88
Europe annual subscription price: £128.88
USA annual subscription price: £128.88
Rest of World annual subscription price: £140.88

UK subscription and back issue orderline: 0845 241 5159
Overseas subscription order line: +44 (0)1959 543 747
Toll free USA subscription order line: 1-888-777-0275
UK customer service team: 01959 543 747

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For customer service support, please visit: *help.kelsey.co.uk*

Customer service and subscription postal address:
911 & Porsche World Customer Service Team,
Kelsey Publishing Ltd, The Granary, Downs Court, ME18 6AL, UK

DISTRIBUTION
Seymour Distribution Limited Tel: 020 7429 4000

Distribution in Northern Ireland and the Republic Of Ireland:
Newspread Tel: +353 23 886 3850

CLASSIFIEDS
Tel: 0906 802 0279
Premium rate line, operated by Talk Media Sales on behalf of Kelsey Publishing Ltd. Calls cost 65p per minute from a BT landline. Other networks and mobiles may vary. Lines open Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm.

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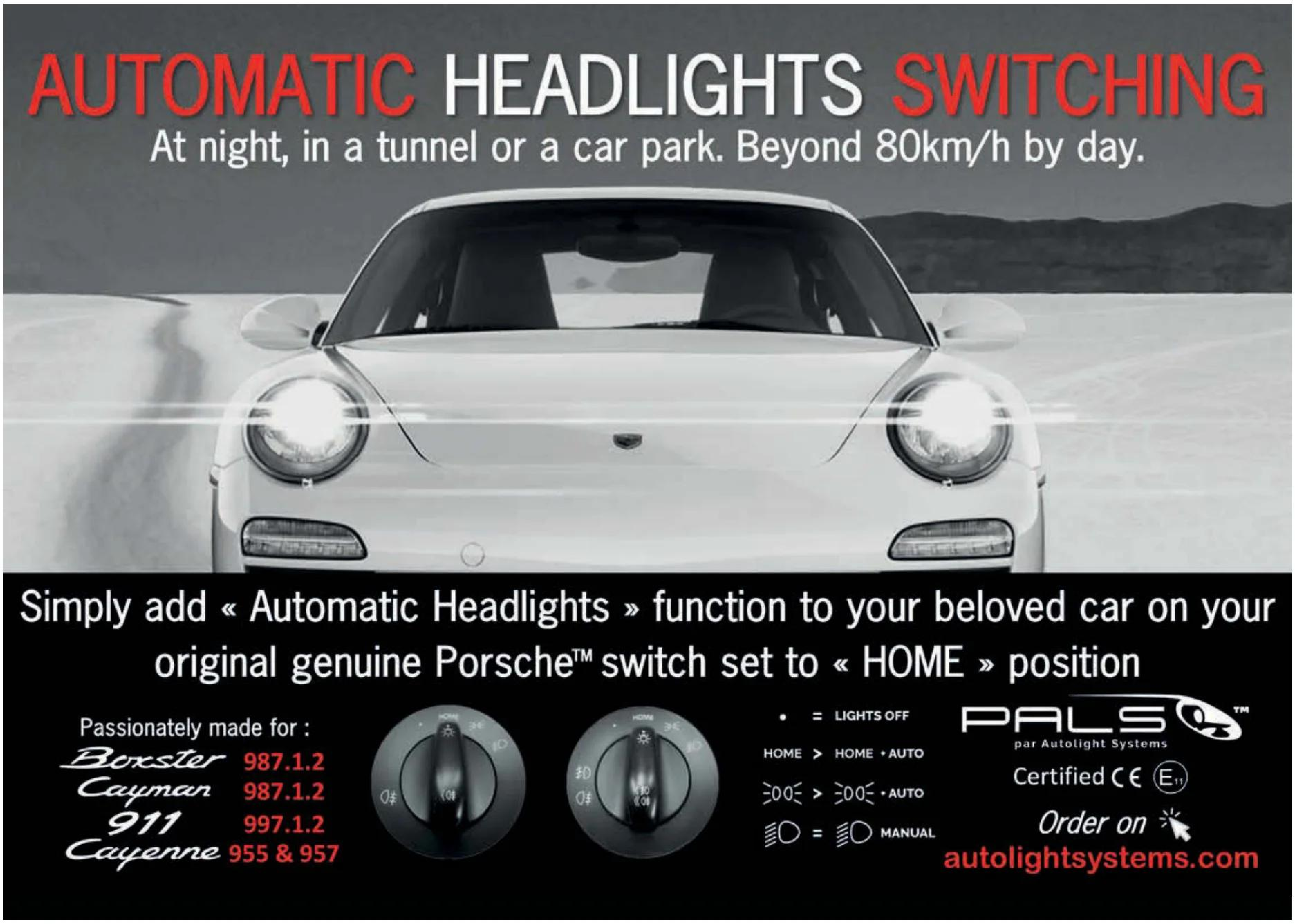

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2025's BEST BUYS
34

FEATURES

10 **FRESH AIR MOTORING**
Sampling the brand-new 911 Targa 4 GTS.

34 **GREY ANATOMY**
997 GTS and 992 GTS go head-to-head.

49 **2025's BEST BUYS**
Top Porsche tips for the year ahead.

62 **AUTOMATIC FOR THE PEOPLE**
The budget-friendly 964 Targa Tiptronic.

80 **ILLUMINATING IDEA**
Dan Furr's 944 Turbo awakes from slumber.

82 **BARGAIN BASEMENT**
Revisiting the brilliant 996 Carrera 4S.

94 **EUROPEAN VACATION**
Hitting the road in a 981 Boxster S.

104 **STATE OF HIBERNATION**
Dan Sherwood retires his GT3 for winter.

108 **DARK STAR**
Testing the TechArt Taycan Sport Turismo.

118 **MARKET WATCH**
What's hot (and what's not) at auction.

911&Porsche World
JANUARY 2025
ISSUE No.366

CONTENTS

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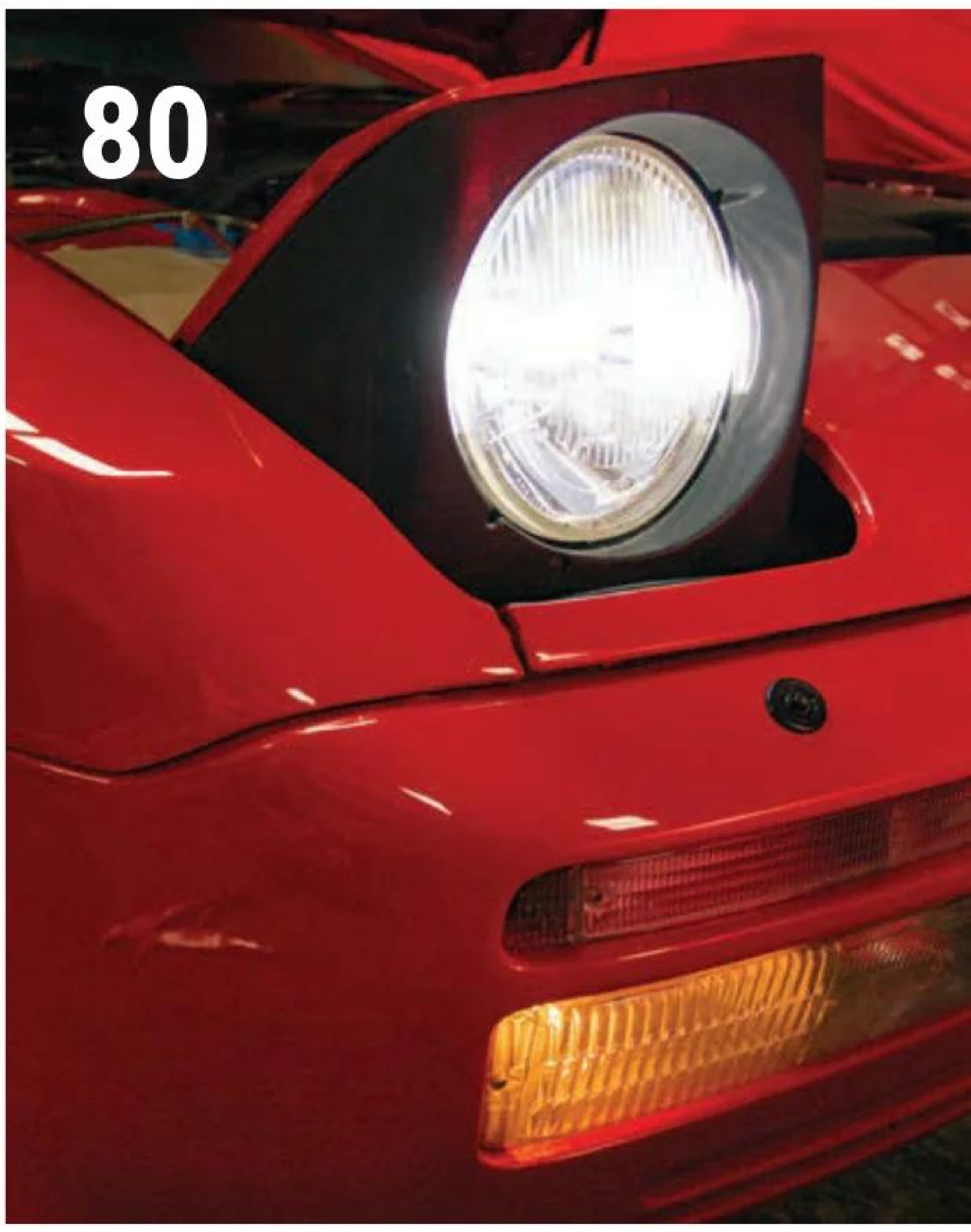

REGULARS

18 **THE BULLETIN**
The new 911 GT3 and Taycan models.

22 **ESSENTIALS**
New products for you and your Porsche.

29 **COMMENT**
Tom Vagi and Karl Meyer speak their brains.

116 **SUBSCRIPTION DEALS**
Get the magazine delivered to your door.

122 **DEALER SPOTLIGHT**
Plum choices from the dealer network.

130 **NEXT ISSUE**
Hartech's 4.2-litre 997 breaks cover.

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2025's BEST BUYS

FRESH AIR MOTORING

***911 & Porsche World* samples the brand-new 911 Targa 4 GTS...**

Words **James Fossdyke** Photography **Daniel Wollstein**

Above Front bumper features the 'toothy' intake slats only the 992's mother can love

In many ways, the idea of a GTS-badged 911 Targa is a something of a contradiction. After all, GTS is supposed to be the halfway house between GT3 and the more conventional Carreras. Essentially, a GTS is a road car with half an eye on the occasional track day. As such, GTS specification is ideally suited to the coupe shape, but here we are, testing a GTS-kitted Targa. Arguably like GTS itself, the Targa concept is something of a compromise. Specifically, it's an 'in between' model sandwiched by coupe and cabriolet body styles. From its roots as a workaround for US road safety regulations, to its current positioning as a striking alternative to al fresco motoring or the traditional tin-top, the Targa-bodied 911 has always been a bit of a happy medium.

With this in mind, GTS and Targa don't make such strange bedfellows.

The dark alloys, sportier body kit and black lettering give the new Targa GTS an air of menace missing from lesser 911 models. This is sure to play well with buyers, but we're less sure if the new, more aerodynamically sophisticated front bumper is going to win many fans. As in the coupe, the vertical slats open and close automatically to reduce drag or increase cooling as necessary, but they don't look anything like as sleek as Porsche insists. And when the Targa's roof is tucked away, they appear a tad unnecessary, given the enormous glasshouse looking like an air scoop behind the seats.

There's more to style than the exterior, though – the Targa has been afforded the same internal upgrades as the new 992 coupe. Porsche's beloved Race-Tex microfibre upholstery is everywhere, and while the fabric and other trim is all black, things are lifted by the 911's new digital instrument display. It's much the same as the curved display in the Cayenne and Taycan, providing a nicely presented, sharp set of dials. We're sad to see the old half-and-half dials go, but the new layout is considerably easier to read, primarily because your hands and the steering wheel no longer obstruct the view of the outer dials. From an ergonomic standpoint, then, this was a change worth making.

Other changes are few and far between, with only some adjustments to the infotainment touchscreen making headlines. In terms of technology, Porsche is keen to make the 911 feel more up to date, meaning there are fresh connectivity systems on show, as well as other minor tweaks. For example, we spotted a change to the drive mode selector on the steering wheel. It used to feel a bit cheap, but the new selector is a little more 'premium' to the touch, even if we can't say the same about its appearance, complete with red plastic push-to-pass button at its centre. It's all a bit too gimmicky for our liking, but perhaps too few owners had noticed a drive mode selector was present in the old model?

This tweak aside, the new Targa GTS is a *grown-up* 911. Practicality is largely unchanged from the first-generation 992 Targa, as demonstrated by the same

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GTS
0
km/h
DRIVE
MODE
AIRBAG

Above Interior features all the lashings of Alcantara and colour-coded stitching we've come to expect from a GTS, though the red 'push to pass' button is a bit tacky for our liking

135-litre tub under the nose and the same 'four-seat' layout in the cabin. And the roof is unchanged, with the same glorious folding mechanism tucking the fabric panel under the rear glasshouse. As before, space in the cabin is perfectly ample for two, although those cramped rear seats are only for kid. On the plus side, the 'boot' carries more than the official load capacity might suggest, meaning clever packing of soft bags will provide more than enough for two people's luggage on a weekend away. Maybe even a week, providing you can pack light and you're going somewhere warm enough to drop the roof.

The age-old issue of Targa blusteriness remains a blight on this 911's usefulness. Wind noticeably flutters about the cabin, but it's particularly bad when the windows are down. Put them up, and you feel less exposed, but you also feel slightly more enclosed, what with the roll hoop behind your head and the top of the windscreen just in front of you. If you want a full-blown open-top experience, the new 911 Cabriolet is a better bet.

While the Targa GTS is less of a 'proper' drop-top than its cabriolet equivalent, however, it makes use of the same powerplant. Yes, we're talking about the controversial T-Hybrid powertrain from the GTS coupe, including Porsche's clever new 3.6-litre flat-six and the accompanying 40kW electric motor housed inside the upgraded eight-speed PDK semi-automatic gearbox. As with coupe and cabriolet versions of the new 911 GTS, this combination churns out up to 534bhp, which is sixty ponies more than the previous GTS.

Unlike the GTS coupe, the Targa variant is presently available only in all-wheel-drive Targa 4 form, splitting power between the front and rear axles. This, combined with the extra power, the electric motor's relentlessness and the introduction of an electrically assisted turbocharger, means zero to 62mph is achieved in 3.1 seconds, which is a tenth slower than the coupe, but four tenths faster than the earlier 992 Targa GTS.

We rather liked the all-wheel-drive version of the new 911 GTS coupe, with its stunning ability to find traction no matter what. The Targa's power delivery feels no different. You get the same mountain of torque when you put

TECH SPEC

Model	911 Carrera GTS
Price	From £149,100
Powertrain	3.6-litre turbocharged flat-six petrol with 40kW electric motor housed in an eight-speed semi-automatic gearbox
Economy	25.7-26.2mpg
CO_2 emissions	244-250g/km
Top speed	194mph
Power	534bhp at 7,500rpm
Torque	457lb-ft at 2,000rpm
0-62mph	3.1 seconds
Weight	1,745kg (DIN)
Length	4,553mm
Wheelbase	2,450mm

Drive
Assistance
Trip
Comfort
12:14
Drive moc
Normal
Chassis
Normal
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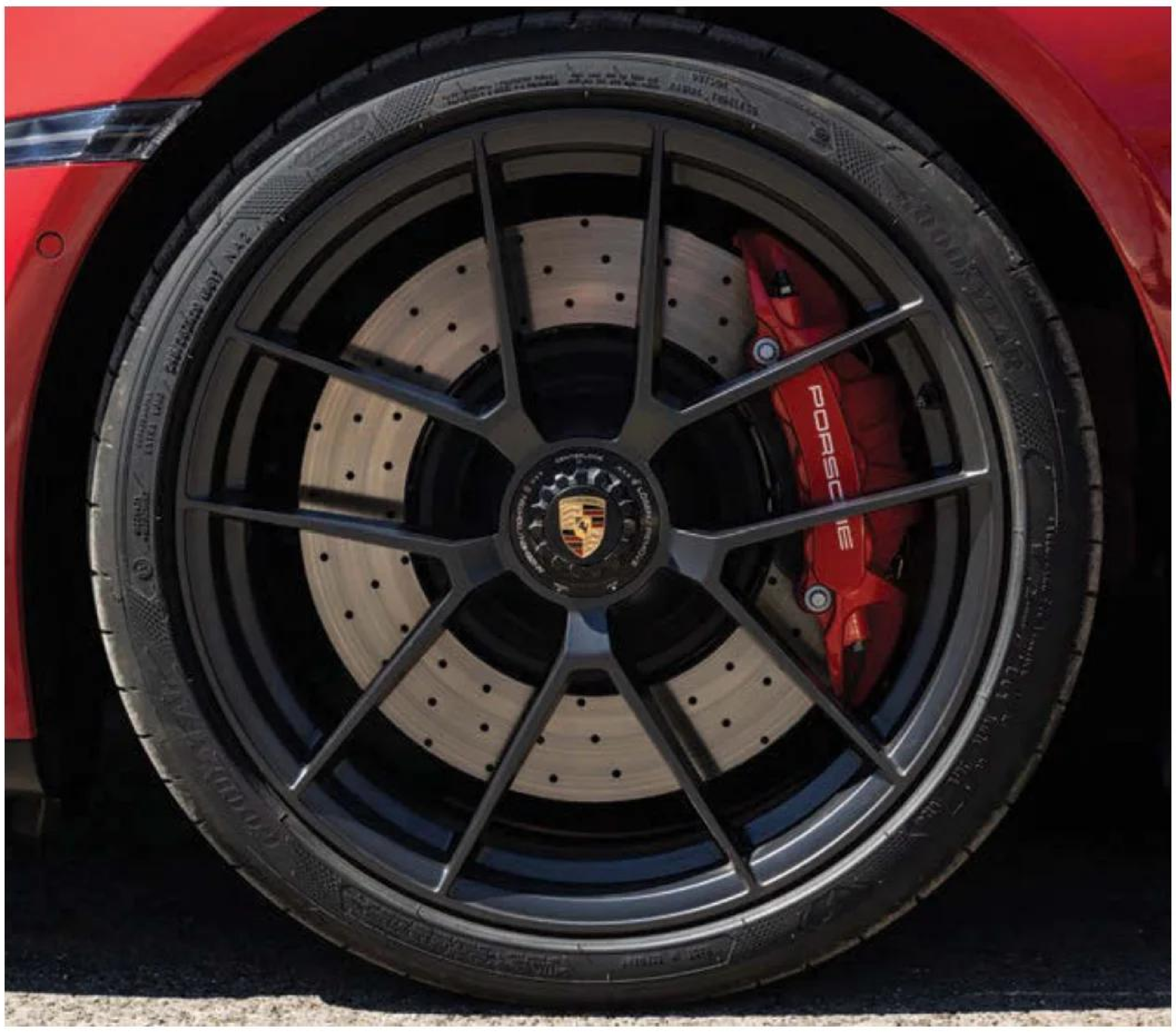

Above Clever as the front airdam may be, it's not Porsche's finest design hour

Below Classic rollover hoop styling is finished in black

your foot down, as well as the same combination of wide tyres and all-wheel drive giving the coupe epic access to the performance on offer, regardless of the conditions or the surface. Naturally, there's the same ungodly overtaking performance, the result of instant boost from the aforementioned electrically assisted turbocharger and instant response to a press of the bright red button on the steering wheel.

Even with the roof tucked away, there's no real sense this is a hybrid – the electric motor is only ever really *assisting* the engine. That said, while the GTS feels surprisingly quiet and refined at lower speeds and with the sports exhaust in its least angry setting, it quickly gets more aggressive. Flip the exhaust switch (a button on the dash) and all hell breaks loose behind your ears.

> **THE SAME MOUNTAIN OF TORQUE WHEN YOU PUT YOUR FOOT DOWN, AS WELL AS THE SAME COMBINATION OF WIDE TYRES AND ALL-WHEEL DRIVE**

The T-Hybrid system is endearingly characterful and makes an animalistic sound, snuffling and snorting like an inquisitive badger as the turbocharger works its magic. This is especially noticeable when you start playing with the snappy double-clutch gearbox, allowing you to hammer your way through the ratios. As in the coupe, the changes can feel a tad abrupt, particularly in Sport Plus mode, but the electric motor helps to even out the power delivery through shifts, and the little motor in the turbocharger ensures there's never a dropping of boost. Trust us when we say the noise accompanying the shifts (assuming all the sportiest settings are engaged) is addictive.

Even so, there isn't much need to mess about with the paddles behind the steering wheel, because Porsche has refined PDK so spectacularly it's now impossibly brilliant, despite now housing an electric motor. It's almost always in the right gear, and though you can catch it out in certain situations, such moments are few and far between. Yet for all the power and the spectacular power delivery on offer, amazing handling draws enthusiasts to Porsche's GTS models. The new 911 Targa GTS is no exception, although it doesn't quite have the same laser focus on handling as its siblings. For instance, where the GTS coupe and cabriolet are lowered ten millimetres (when compared with the chassis of the standard Carrera), the Targa maintains the same ride height as its less powerful siblings. This higher centre of gravity has quite an impact on the way the car drives.

In corners, it shares the precision of the coupe, thanks to utterly sublime and perfectly weighted steering providing ideal feedback, but it lacks a little sharpness and pointiness by comparison. The nose doesn't turn in quite as eagerly, despite the inclusion of four-wheel steering as standard, which is designed to reduce the turning circle at low speeds and increase stability at higher speeds. Also, the Targa feels remarkably heavy, despite Porsche's insistence T-Hybrid GTS models are only fifty kilograms (or thereabouts) heavier than their predecessors. Of course, the 1,745kg Targa weighs close to a hundred kilos more than the coupe, but it feels

Above Wind noise is always an issue with Targas, and the new 992 semi-open-top model is no exception

significantly weightier than the hard-top, and somehow feels larger on the road, as if there's a greater sense of bulk.

Nevertheless, everything is relative, and the Targa is spectacularly good to drive, with impressive balance and stability, despite the extra weight and height. Although it isn't as agile as the lighter, lower GTS models, and though there's fractionally more body movement as the weight moves around in corners, none of this stops you having fun. The Targa doesn't feel as fast or as lively as the coupe, but it certainly feels as though it could get close if in the right hands. And when the coupe is so epic on a track, that's quite the accolade.

> **YES, IT'S £10,000 MORE EXPENSIVE THAN THE CARRERA 4 GTS COUPE, BUT THAT'S NOTHING AT THIS PRICE POINT**

Even with the added weight, the all-wheel-drive system and the four-wheel steering, the new 911 Targa GTS behaves like a proper rear-biased sports car, and though the all-wheel-drive system manages traction, it's happy for you to slide the rear end if you really want to. You have to mean it, though, because the massive tyres and the fourby system provide seemingly endless traction and therefore a supreme sense of security, even if you're a bit bold with the throttle. This means the Targa is immense on the exit of corners, though the slightly softer ride than that of the GTS coupe means fast, sweeping B-roads feel more like the Targa's home ground than, say, a tight and technical race circuit would.

The big differentiator for the Targa is not the way it drives, but the way it rides. Aside from the ride height, Porsche has given this 911 much the same suspension upgrades as the other GTS models, but the extra ten millimetres of ground clearance somehow revolutionises the comfort, turning the GTS from a stiff sports car into a supple grand tourer. Admittedly, the roads of our test route in southern Spain were far from challenging, but the bumps we encountered were dealt with every bit as deftly as they were in the standard Carrera. You can still feel those imperfections through the steering wheel and seat, which is really quite helpful when you're pushing on a bit, and it seems to be an intentional move from Porsche's engineers, who talk about "Porsche comfort". In other words, the kind of informative, composed feel characterising the brand's more luxurious cars.

This is a shining example of that philosophy, letting you know what the wheels are dealing with without transmitting any particularly big impacts or jolts to your backside. The Targa GTS soaks them up without fuss or frenzy and carries on unflustered, which makes it a fantastically appealing long-range sports car. For summer road trips combining mountain roads with motorway cruises, this is the GTS we'd go for. In fact, this is the GTS we'd go for in almost any situation. Obviously, the coupe will better serve trackday enthusiasts, but anywhere else, the Targa wins out. Though first impressions suggest the second-generation 992 feels fractionally more supple than its predecessor across the board, we expect the GTS coupe to be a little too firm over the UK's shocking road surfaces. With the Targa GTS, though, the design, the option of lowering the roof and the ride comfort all help to make it a real sweet spot in the new 911 range, and one making a lot of sense for buyers in Britain. Yes, it's £10,000 more expensive than the Carrera 4 GTS coupe, but that's nothing at this price point. The Targa is ideal for those who want something forty percent more comfortable than the coupe and cabriolet, yet offering ninety-five percent of the same thrills on the right road. Sounds like a compromise worth making, doesn't it? ●

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THE BULLETIN

News from the world of Porsche

NEW 911 GT3 AND TOURING VERSION NOW AVAILABLE TO ORDER

Porsche has relaunched the 911 GT3. This new version of the exceptionally track-ready and street-legal sports car is based on the second-generation 992 and makes its debut in the GT3's twenty-fifth anniversary year. Boasting what the manufacturer refers to as its "expanded lightweight strategy", the car is powered by a normally aspirated four-litre flat-six developing 503bhp, complemented by new, highly customer-focused options.

The Weissach package, for example, marks the first time such a kit is offered for the 911 GT3, providing custom configuration options for use on the track. In addition, the new GT3 comes with more extensive standard equipment, as well as non-Weissach options further enhancing the car's precision and sportiness.

The new 911 GT3 model (standard and Touring) features a sharpened design at the front and rear, as well as adapted aerodynamics. In both variants, the re-contoured front diffuser, the refined shape of the spoiler lip and modified fins on the underbody increase downforce and optimise airflow. Redesigned Matrix LED headlights — available on the new GT3 with an optional white accent ring — combine all the light functions of the 911 and eliminate the need for additional lights in the front apron. This enables an enlarged air inlet area. At the rear, the diffuser, air inlets and rear lid have been redesigned, with the rear wing exhibiting newly developed angled sideplates.

EQUIPPED WITH NOT ONLY TWO PARTICULATE FILTERS, BUT ALSO FOUR CATALYTIC CONVERTERS

Porsche has used specially developed, aerodynamically optimised trailing arms with a teardrop profile on the double-wishbone front axle. These parts increase downforce in the wheel arch at high speeds and improve brake cooling. To ensure the downforce balance between the front and rear axles is maintained even when braking from high speed, the factory's suspension engineers have reduced pitching (anti-dive) — the front ball joint of the lower trailing arm has been set lower on the front axle to facilitate this improvement. If this sounds familiar, then you'll be aware of the fact the GT3 has adopted these modifications from the current 911 GT3 RS.

With this new GT3, Porsche is hoping to define variants clearly. To this end, for the first time, the popular Touring package is available straight from market launch. The Touring designation goes back to an equipment variant offered on the Carrera RS 2.7 and has been part of the GT3 programme since 2017. It is even more distinctive for the new 911 GT3, as reflected in the *911 GT3 Touring* logo on the rear lid. The Touring package dispenses with the fixed wing and thus preserves the timelessly elegant line of the 911. An extendable rear spoiler with a tear-off edge, Gurney flap and an adapted fin design on the underbody provide aerodynamic balance.

The interior offers high-quality leather and classic sporty ambience. For the first time, a rear seat system for the GT3 Touring is available as an option. This allows the model to be adapted even more individually to the wishes of the customer for maximum driving pleasure. "Particularly on winding country roads, you can feel the new GT3's steering is even better tuned than its predecessor," says Porsche brand ambassador and two-time World Rally Championship victor, Walter Röhrl. "It instils even greater confidence because the car responds more calmly from the centre position without losing any of its directness. The shorter gear ratio also significantly enhances driving pleasure on twisty roads."

Low overall weight contributes to the agile and direct handling of the new 911 GT3. A new, silver-coloured lightweight aluminium wheel reduces unsprung mass in each corner by more than 1.5 kilos (when compared to the previous GT3). Optionally, magnesium wheels are available for both the Weissach and Leichtbau packages. These rims save a whopping nine kilograms. Also, a new 40Ah lithium-ion lightweight battery contributes to the new GT3's 'athletic' body mass index by shaving off another four kilograms. In its lightest configuration, the new GT3 weighs just 1,420 kilograms.

The four-litre normally aspirated boxer in the new GT3 has been designed for significantly strict (current) exhaust standards and is equipped with not only two particulate filters, but also four catalytic converters. With this extremely powerful emission control system, the Porsche also delivers a gripping soundscape.

The engine's impressive output was attained through a series of optimisation measures. For example, the cylinder heads have been revised, while the sharper camshafts of the current 911 GT3 RS provide even more dynamic performance in the upper engine-speed range. In addition, flow-optimised individual throttle valves and optimised oil coolers are used. The boxer continues to deliver 375kW. This means each kilowatt of the high-speed engine only has to move 3.8 kilograms (2.8 kg/PS) in the GT3's lightest configuration. Plus, both the seven-speed dual-clutch semi-automatic PDK transmission and the six-speed 'GT' manual gearbox possess a final drive ratio eight percent shorter than that of the previous GT3. Incidentally, both gearbox options are available for the GT3 and the GT3 Touring.

With PDK, the new 911 GT3 accelerates to 62mph in 3.4 seconds dead and reaches top speed of 193mph. The manual GT3 achieves the same benchmark sprint in a slower 3.9 seconds, but can reach higher top speed due to reduced weight, resulting in a fraction under 195mph, not that you'd be able to tell the difference unless timing laps at a race track.

A new lightweight bucket seat with a folding backrest and a carbon shell is available as an option, as is a matching wristwatch. To secure a build slot, speak to your local Porsche Centre.

PORSCHE
Taycan GTS

PORSCHE ROUNDS OFF THE SECOND-GENERATION TAYCAN WITH NEW GTS

The range of Taycan models has never been so expansive — with three body variants, all-wheel and rear-wheel drive, plus various power levels ranging from 300kW to 760kW, there are now sixteen available Taycan variants, all told.

The Taycan 4 saloon and the new edition of the Taycan GTS and Taycan GTS Sport Turismo have just been added. The three new options complete the Taycan portfolio and can now be ordered, with deliveries expected in early 2025. New exterior colours are also available for all Taycan models. In the 'Legends' category, Slate Grey Neo and Pale Blue Metallic complete the range, while Purple Sky Metallic has been added to the 'Dreams' category.

"With the extremely wide-ranging Taycan line-up, we meet a wide range of customer wishes and mobility needs. Our three latest innovations exemplify this exceptional breadth," says Kevin Giek, Vice President of Taycan Model Line. "The first generation of the Taycan GTS was already the sporty standard-bearer of the model line, positioned between the Taycan 4S and Taycan Turbo. The new GTS is no exception. At the other end of the range, the Taycan 4 sports sedan combines the high efficiency of the entry-level model with the superior handling of all-wheel drive."

The three new models naturally have all of the many enhancements (in terms of design, technology and equipment) with which Porsche updated the Taycan at the beginning of the year. The electric sports car surpasses its predecessor in almost every discipline — the new models have more power, longer range, accelerate faster and charge in less time with greater stability. Also, all new Taycans feature an even more extensive standard equipment list. The simultaneous improvement of performance and efficiency is down to a number of factors: an advanced powertrain with a new rear-axle motor (with up to 80kW more power than its predecessor on all models), a modified pulse inverter with optimised software, more powerful batteries, revised thermal management, a next-generation heat pump and a modified recuperation and all-wheel-drive strategy. At 800-volt DC charging stations, for example, a new Taycan can be charged at up to 320kW. The maximum recuperation capacity during deceleration from high speeds has increased to up to 400kW.

A MODIFIED PULSE INVERTER, MORE POWERFUL BATTERIES AND REVISED THERMAL MANAGEMENT

As a sporty all-rounder, the Taycan GTS impresses with up to 515kW of overboost power when using Launch Control, some 75kW more than its predecessor. With the new 'push-to-pass' function in the standard Sport Chrono package, a boost of up to 70kW can be called upon for ten seconds at the touch of a button. This feature has a particularly sporty character — at low speed, torque is raised to Launch Control levels. As in the Taycan Turbo GT, the boost is indicated by a countdown timer in the instrument cluster and is dynamically staged with animated rings on the speedometer.

The Taycan GTS saloon and Taycan GTS Sport Turismo hit 62mph from standstill in just 3.3 seconds, which is 0.4 seconds faster than each model's respective predecessors. The GTS saloon takes just 10.4 seconds to complete the sprint from zero to 124mph, a full 1.6 seconds less than before. The range has also been improved by almost seventy-five miles and, impressively, is now up to 390 miles in the Worldwide Light Vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP).

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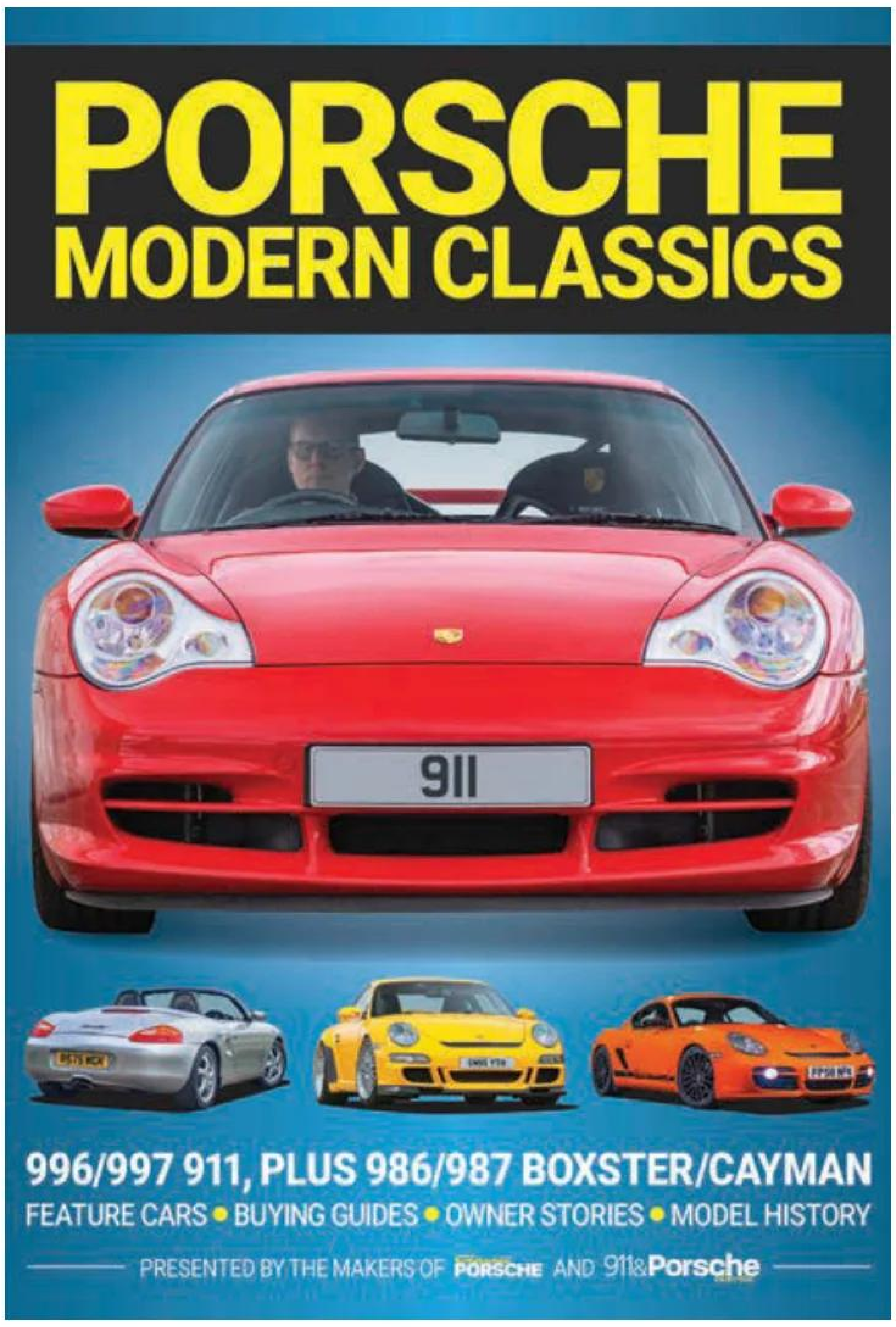
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New from the team behind *911 & Porsche World* magazine comes this 164-page celebration of the 996- and 997-generation 911s and their Boxster/Cayman 986/987 counterparts. We chart the design and evolution of this hugely popular range of Porsches, going on to examine the long-lasting impact these cars have had on all subsequent Porsche products, not to mention the sports car world as a whole. Along the way, we get behind the wheel of standout models, delve into owner stories, explore ground-breaking engineering and show you what to look out for when on the hunt for an early water-cooled 911 or Boxster/Cayman to call your own. Essential reading for marque enthusiasts, this beautifully presented bookazine comes hot on the heels of our successful *Porsche Air-Cooled Classics* title and can be ordered at the link below.

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JP GROUP CLASSIC LEATHER STRAPS FOR 356

JP Group, parent company of Porsche body panel and exhaust manufacturer, Dansk, has developed a unique series of high-quality leather straps for the 356. Specifically, these straps are designed to secure the spare wheel, but are also available for the 356's luggage rack. Pitched through the JP Group Classic Line range and offered in black or dark brown to suit the host 356's interior, these low-cost leather straps can be ordered direct from the online store of independent Porsche parts retailer, Sierra Madre Collection, where new customers can take advantage of a ten percent discount on their first order. Suitable for all 356s, from the very first to the very last.

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Clarke has released a new line of intelligent battery chargers and maintainers, ideal for winter, when many Porsches will be retired from the road. The smallest of Clarke's offerings is the IBC2, featuring a fully automated six-stage charging cycle, delivering up to two amps of charging. The IBC2 can be used with all types of lead acid batteries and LiFePO4 batteries up to 60Ah. The unit includes detachable battery clamps and ring terminals, and is fitted with an inline fuse for added usage. Several safety features, such as reverse polarity, short circuit protection and overload prevention, provide peace of mind during operation. The six-stage cycle includes Activate Battery, Maintenance Charge, CC, CV, Close Charging and Compensation Charge. At the top of the range is the IBC10, compatible with the same batteries as the IBC2, but providing a ten-stage cycle (Activate Battery, Devulcanization, Repair, Pulse Current Charge, CC, CV, Floating Charge, Flat Charge, Analysis Battery, Compensation Charge), an LCD screen (as opposed to the IBC2's LED indicators), and ten amps of charging for batteries up to 200Ah.

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LIMITED EDITION CARRERA RS 2.7 WIRE SCULPTURES BY CHRIS TWITCHELL

Chris Twitchell is an engineer and artist with a long-held passion for Porsche products, especially the manufacturer's air-cooled cars. Inspired by the automotive body-making skills and techniques of yesteryear, he aims to capture the art and beauty of classic sports car design through the medium of wire. Among his recent work is a 1:3.5 depiction of the Carrera RS 2.7. Finished in a colour of the buyer's choosing, this fantastically detailed 2.75kg (with acrylic frame) sculpture measures 1.19x0.48x0.31 metres (LxWxH) and is limited to just twenty-five hand-made units, as is the case with Chris's Rosso Chiaro 250 GTO wire sculpture, inspired by the buck used by Ferrari's designers in period. Born into a car obsessed family in the 1970s, Chris had an early exposure to being in and around anything with four wheels, which led later to becoming actively involved with cars as a major hobby. As a baby, he had car parts as ceiling mobiles, so there really wasn't much hope of anything else! His father and grandfather were engineers, while his mother had a background in art. These influences served to culminate in his own career as an engineer, but more recently combining this with his passion for art, design and cars, particularly from the classic eras, which has led to Chris establishing himself as an independent artist focusing on the specialist skill of wire car art.

Price: POA
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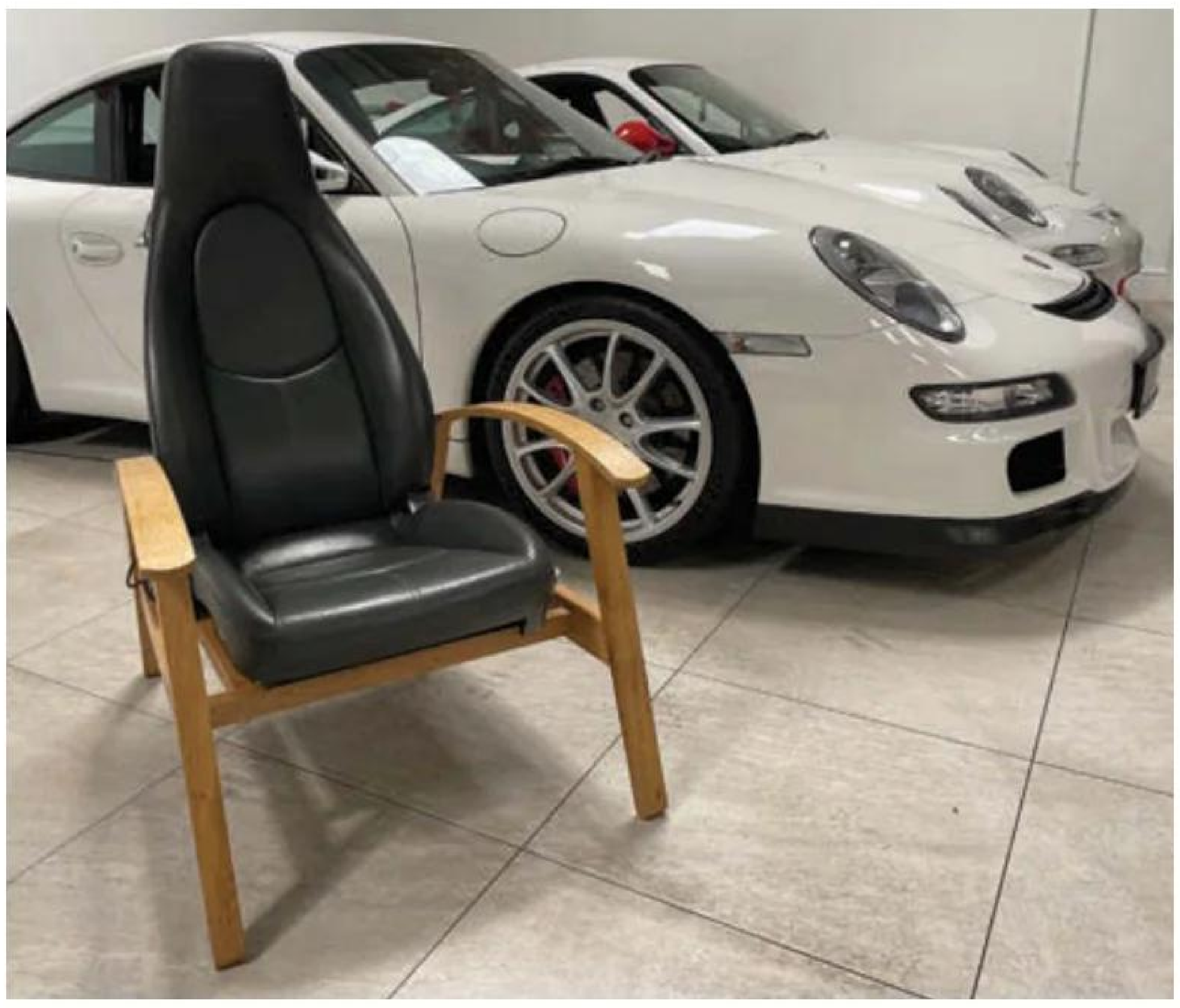
PAT MEAD DESIGNS BESPOKE 911 ARMCHAIRS



Oxfordshire based furniture maker, Pat Mead Designs, has started making armchairs for the home or garage from Porsche sports car seats. Recognising car seats are comfortable, hard-wearing and adjustable, the design brief was to make an armchair that would be fun, unique and sit easily with other furniture in the home. As a former Porsche owner and brand enthusiast, Pat chose to focus on 911 seats. While looking for a curve that would make the arms comfortable for people of different heights, the sketches on his drawing board started to look a lot like the roofline of a 911. This neat coincidence went on to determine the curvature of the seat arms. Working with quality used seats and sustainably sourced timber, Pat Mead Designs can build armchairs to customer specification from different Porsche models, various species of wood and a variety of finishes. Visit the website for further information.

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NINEMEISTER UPDATES 9M ONLINE TUNING STORE

9M is the performance product brand name of Warrington-based independent Porsche restoration and tuning firm, Ninemeister. Regular readers will know we've featured many 9M products — and complete 9M restomods — in these pages, but the company has made purchase of its offerings more straightforward with the launch of the 9M online tuning store. Simply open your browser and visit *ninemeistershop.com*, where you'll find an ever increasing number of 9M goodies, from exhaust systems to lightweight flywheels, clutch kits, wing risers and more. Just a few simple clicks is all it takes to order 9M products for your Porsche.
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Tired of your G-series 911 (2.7-litre through 3.3-litre engines from 1974 to 1989) leaving oil puddles in your garage and on your driveway? There's only so long you can run the line about your Porsche 'sweating horsepower' before the joke wears thin. Rennline has the solution with its new billet aluminium timing chain covers. The factory units are prone to leaking and degradation due to flaws in the original design and manufacturing process. Rennline's cover address these failings by offering what the company claims is the "best long-term solution on the market", promising a lifetime of leak-free miles. Constructed from CNC-machined billet 6061-T6 aluminium and available with a corrosion-resistant anodised clear, black or grey finish, these tip-top timing chain covers come with pre-installed fifteen-millimetre freeze plugs (for tensioner mounting) and are compatible with OEM gaskets.
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TOM VAGI

There's no business like snow business, but owners of 911s and other Porsche products shouldn't be afraid of taking their cars out in inclement weather during the cold season. Make sure the correct black circles are in place and you can have just as much fun as you would in summer...

Tom Vagi is founder of Seacoast Specialist Cars, a New Hampshire-based independent Porsche specialist carrying out repair, maintenance, servicing, sales and restoration. He is a Master Technician, lifelong Porsche enthusiast and Technical Chair for the local chapter of PCA. Visit ***sscarsnh.com***

As the days become shorter and time to the holidays follows suit, we in New England are preparing for the inevitable (and mostly welcome) winter season. I, for one, am looking forward to what's coming — ski resorts are calling my name loudly. Earlier this week, in a bout of reminiscing over winters past, I recalled the day I picked up my 991 Carrera 4S from the Porsche Centre I worked at. It was an unexpected deal to be had at the end of the year and threw me for a bit of a loop.

At the time, I was the Centre's Service Manager and not really in the market for a new car, but the sales department had just purchased a beautiful 2015 Carrera 4S from a customer and they needed to sell it before the new year began. It happened to be December 28th, so not a lot of time to get the deal done, so to speak. After a quick road test and an offer I couldn't refuse (on the trade-in of my then summer car, a 2017 Ford Mustang GT350), a deal was struck and I purchased the Porsche.

Thus began a series of interesting experiences. It began with the fact the car came with two sets of tyres, one for summer, one for winter. Now, in my experience, the concept of snow tyres on a 911 in New England comes to most Porschephiles as a sort of blasphemy, but there is method to the madness. Around here, there are many good driving days, with the temperature below 45°F, where summer rubber begins to have the softness of a hockey puck. Swap to a set of snows, however, and cold weather grip is restored.

Having snow tyres for the shoulder season is all well and good, but mention driving your 911 in the white stuff and people's eyes get big, as if you told them the world was flat. Many of us know most Porsches, including 911s, are quite capable as winter vehicles. Some of us might even say (perish the thought) they're fun to drive in snow. I know of this type of thinking because it's what I was brought up with. In the fall, you would put your summer car away until the salt was off the ground and the driving season could resume. I'm guilty as charged insofar as my 944 Turbo hasn't seen salt, perhaps ever. Certainly not while I've owned it.

Somehow, my 991 was different. More resilient, maybe? As the winter tyres were already on the car when I bought it, I drove home on a dry day and swore to myself I would never drive this 911 in the salt. The next day, however, my resolve was waning. I drove the car to work, reasoning the roads were dry and no salt would stick to the car. As I had hoped, it neither fell apart nor immediately devalued by fifty percent. Unsurprisingly, I rather enjoyed the experience. In fact, I drove that car every day for the next year, with the exception of when there was more than four inches of snow on the ground and my Cayenne was needed (sometimes, you really do need ground clearance, especially in New Hampshire). Barring incredulous looks from other drivers wondering what on earth I was thinking driving a 911 in snow, the winter went by without a hitch and the car performed perfectly.

That was when I realised the second great thing about driving a 911 year-round: I didn't have to store it. A simple tyre swap in the spring and fall and I was all set. The efficiency of this setup was wonderful and, frankly, not that unlike that of every other kind of car.

It is, of course, time to address the giant elephant in the room. Yes, the idea that there will potentially be rust on the car as consequence of this all-weather driving. This really didn't bother me until I stopped to think about it. I grew up driving Audis and SAABs on what could well be the most salted roads anywhere in the world. Back then, it wasn't a question of whether your car would rust, but *when* it would rust. For my money, Audis were always the most rust-resistant. Thankfully, modern 911s (all modern Porsche products, really) have far better paint technology than was adopted back in the days of my youth. Besides, I now live in an area far less prone to road salt, meaning the risk is lower.

As it turned out, my gamble paid off. I enjoyed several winters running the 991 daily without incident (or rust). If you're on the fence about putting snow tyres on your 911 and driving it in the cold season, I would encourage you to do so. Yep, do the unthinkable and enjoy your Porsche every day, year-round. Also, it's kind of fun to have people look at you like you've lost your mind. Maybe the crazy smiling I'm guilty of behind the wheel has something to do with it?! ●

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This Porsche 964 Carrera 2 Targa featured with 54,123 miles on the odometer and finished in its factory color Guards Red and a Tan interior. Equipped with a 5-speed manual transmission and a 3.6-liter air-cooled flat-six engine. This collectible air-cooled 964 Carrera is mechanically sound.

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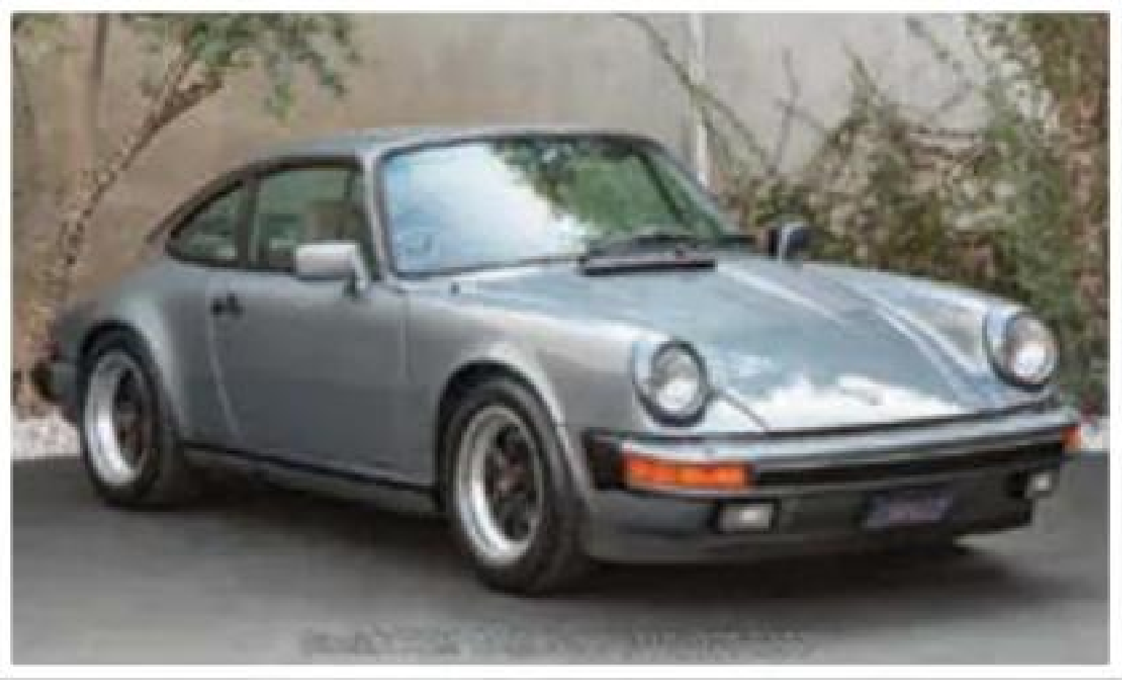

1984 Porsche Carrera Coupe #17729

This 1984 Porsche Carrera Coupe featured with matching numbers. Finished in its special order color Slate Blue Metallic with a beige interior. This blue-plate California car is equipped with a 5-speed manual transaxle, an air-cooled 3.2-liter flat-six, and is mechanically sound.

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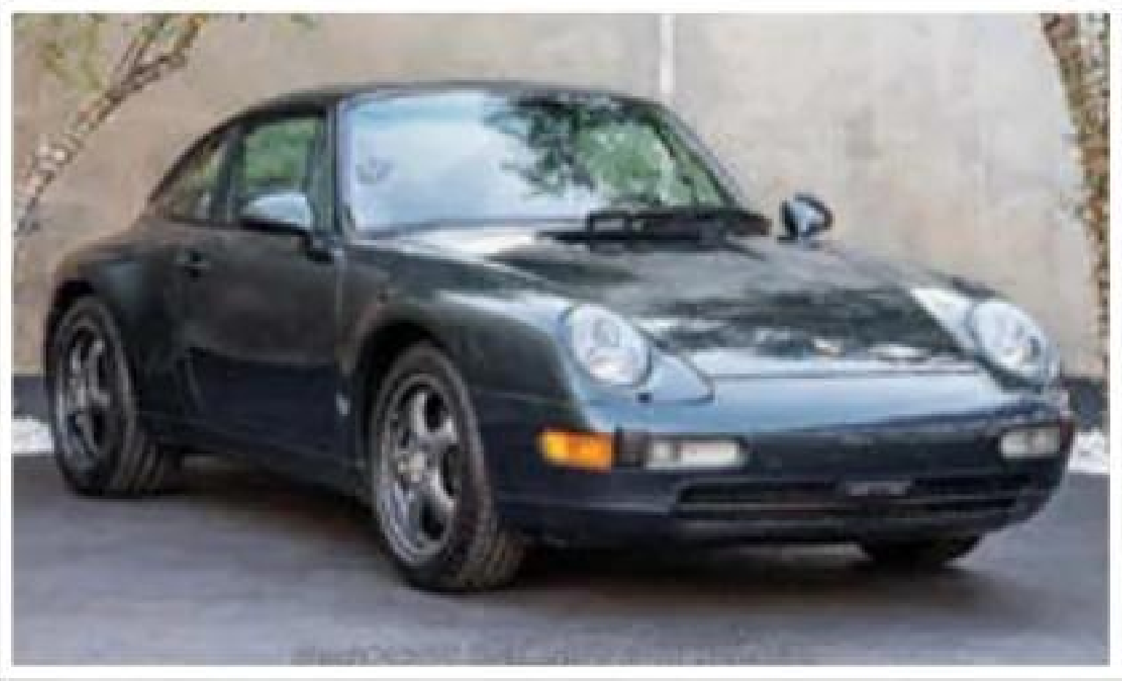

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KARL MEYER

Porsche's unusual approach to launching the new GT3 raises a number of questions, as does the acquisition of many of the UK's Porsche Centres by US investors, an apparent reaction to forecourts full of unsold cars due to over-supply from the factory over a significant period of time...

Karl Meyer** is a UK-based independent Porsche buyer advising OPCs and independent specialists. Buying everything from 986s to Carrera GTs, his is a trusted name in the space of moving off-market and premium Porsches. If buying, selling or part exchanging, call Karl first. Visit **theporschebuyer.com

Despite numerous column inches dedicated to the UK's October budget and speculation regarding its impact on car sales, it has been an encouragingly steady month for retail in the Porsche Centre network (and the trusted indie specialists we work with here at *theporschebuyer.com*). Evidently, our collective passion to own a piece of the hallowed Stuttgart crest outweighs our fear of uncertainty, although to give it correct nuance, this sentiment gets ever-so-slightly weaker the further up the pricing tree you climb.

Regular readers of my contributions to this magazine will know I'm not afraid to pull any punches when keeping you informed, all in the hope of helping you make safe decisions when buying or selling a Porsche. Whilst happy to celebrate what's encouraging, I'm equally willing to highlight concerns in the marketplace. I'm about to do a little more punching than usual, but stick with me — I'll be concluding with potential upside for buyers.

First, a concern of my own. Porsche recently released the second-generation 992 GT3, which I feel marked a radical change for the company and its marketing strategy. You see, for the first time in Porsche history, a GT product has not waited for all (or most of) its understudies to be released first, an approach usually allowing the most gains in research and development and heightening product anticipation. Additionally, this tried and tested way of doing things allows dealerships to give buyers the opportunity to jockey for vehicle allocation.

This is the first time I can think of a modern 911 being released without a product configurator available at the point of launch. And many of you have told me the official GT3 live launch event caught you entirely off-guard. It may be too early to postulate exactly what is being indicated by Porsche bucking a trend most of us expected to see observed, but somehow, this didn't have the usual feel of an anticipated GT Porsche product unveiling.

Moving on, let's talk about over-supply of first-generation 992 into the UK, coupled with the noted declined sales market of 2023/24. This has resulted in an interesting phenomenon, the kind we've never seen in the market: a plethora of nearly new 911s parking themselves up at circa £70,000, making this my magical shopping budget. Armed with seventy grand, however, consider the insane fun that can be had with a first-generation 991 GTS, arguably the best-built, best-sounding 911 of a generation.

Yes, you can be in Stuttgart's new-shape uber-GT for megabucks, but with seventy large ones, you can take your pick of the bunch. A 996 GT3 is surely a solid place to park this kind of money right now? How about a first-generation 991 GT3? Yes, you read that correctly. Maybe a same-age 911 Turbo S, arguably the ultimate everyday supercar? You'd have plenty of change left over from a 997 Turbo with manual transmission. The same can be said of the 997 Turbo S. And then we come to the air-cooled section of this £70,000-per-entry dream garage. The 993 Carrera coupe, Carrera 3.2 Supersport and even the 964 Carrera 2 (if you can find one) hover around this price point, as do concours 912s. Forget trying to build passive income through a property portfolio.

Finally, to that 'up-side' carrot I dangled earlier. Market observers among you will know the UK's Porsche Centre network has undergone much changing of hands in the past couple of months. Group One Automotive bought Inchcape's Centres, while Lithia (another large US corporation) bought the Jardine Group's Centres, then bought up the Stratstone and Pendragon dealerships with the intention of merging them to make the UK's largest franchise of Porsche Centres (ten at last count, although I'm told Porsche Centre Bolton is to be released soon). New blood and new money could be a good thing, but my hope is the new owners listen carefully to experienced old voices within the network. This brand is nuanced like no other — running a Porsche Centre is painfully and beautifully unique to anything else they may have in their portfolio. Put simply, it's not an easy thing to get right.

We know Volkswagen Group is in financial trouble. Porsche has always been the golden egg-laying goose, but there are many cars stuck on main dealer forecourts right now. I suspect this is a large part of why these takeovers are happening, but what does it all mean if you're in the market for a new or nearly new Porsche, particularly if you know the specification you want? Well, if you look hard enough, there are unprecedented opportunities to be had. By all means, I'm happy to entertain conversations with readers interested in securing a bargain. Get in touch. And on that note, I need to think about what I can sell to free up £70,000. ●

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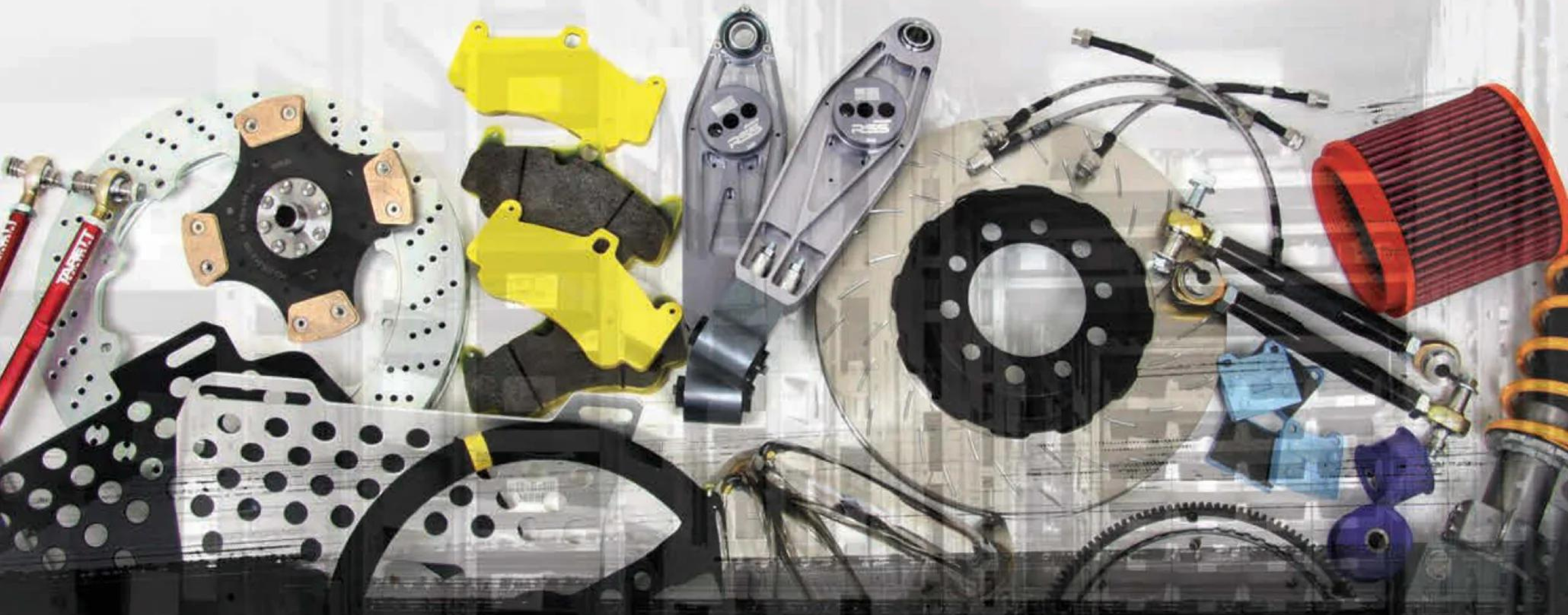

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GREY ANATOMY

As demonstrated elsewhere in this magazine, the GTS badge is now very much part of the 911 line-up, offering specification taking on the Porsche configurator at its own game and winning. Continuing our look at 2025's best buys, we pitch the 997 Carrera GTS against its evolutionary 992 descendant…

Words **Steve Bennett** Photography **Dan Sherwood**

Bizarre as it might seem, Porsche resurrected its Gran Turismo Sport (GTS) badge for the Cayenne. Quite what the Cayenne had in common with the 904 Carrera GTS, the 924 Carrera GTS or the 928 GTS is anyone's guess. After all, the first of the breed (the 904) was a street-legal racer introduced in the early 1960s. The Cayenne is many things, but it isn't a street-legal racer. Still, the Cayenne GTS did set the Carmine Red trend and interiors swathed in touchy-feely Alcantara. And in defence of the Cayenne GTS, it was fast-road biased. Emphasising the point, at model launch, Porsche had a couple of six-speed manual versions on hand. Not many were sold in this trim, but having cog-swapping control over the big V8 was a lot of fun.

SHIFTING THE REAR WHEELS BACK WAS NO SIMPLE MATTER, UNLIKE THE CHANGE FROM SHORT TO LONG-WHEELBASE IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE 911'S LIFE

A slight digression to today's gathering, but I guess had the Cayenne GTS not been a success, Porsche wouldn't have extended the badge to the 997, as well as the 981 Cayman/Boxster and beyond, taking GTS into the 991- and 992-generations of 911. And we wouldn't be at independent Porsche sales specialist, William Francis, exercising our grey matter over this equally grey GTS duo. You're looking at a 997 GTS and a first-generation 992 GTS. Short of a 991 GTS in the middle, this is the perfect evolution of the 911 GTS concept. The 991 is very relevant, though, which we'll come to.

Unlike the Cayenne GTS, the 997 GTS was a bit more than a marketing exercise and bought rather more to the party. Granted, it was kind of a run-out special, insofar as it came right at the end of the 997's time in production, but Porsche definitely saved the best until last, mixing the Carrera 4's widebody with the option of rear-wheel drive, a combination previously the reserve of the GT3 RS and Sport Classic.

There was more. Much more. Part of the GTS's appeal and reputation is based around bang for buck. With the 997, for your basic £78,000, you got the flat-six Powerkit option and its 408bhp, some twenty-five horsepower up on the standard 3.8-litre boxer. True, the Powerkit was an option on the 997 Carrera S, but ticking that box would take the asking price to that of the GTS, so why would you, especially when the GTS came with a twenty-millimetre-wider body (regardless of whether the buyer specified two- or four-wheel drive), Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM) with bespoke GTS suspension settings, plus Sport Chrono, active engine mounts, centrelock wheels and various cosmetic addenda inside and out, including hard-back sport seats and lots of lovely Alcantara? Add all that to the Carrera S and watch the Porsche configurator spin into a frenzy, before spitting out a figure well over £100,000. Little wonder 997 GTS prices remain super-strong.

Returning to the wide bodyshell and referencing the 997 GT3 RS and 997 Sport Classic, I'm conscious I've made this point before when talking about the 997 GTS, but both the GT3 and Sport Classic, complete with their unique suspension setups, had a profound effect on the way I judge a 911 chassis. Put simply, both are utterly beguiling on UK topography in a way current 911s simply aren't. Sure, the GT3 RS is slightly more hardcore (as you would expect), but the Sport Classic was just sublime, gliding over the rough stuff with almost Lotus/Alpine levels of ride and chassis control, almost as if Porsche had abandoned its usual chassis development regime for a UK-specific configuration. It was exactly this setup that the 997 GTS inherited. And, like the 997 Sport Classic, the GTS also got the Powerkit engine. Granted, it didn't have the Fuchs wheels, the ducktail, the double-bubble roof or the ultra-limited edition appeal, but nor did it cost £140,000, which in today's market, can easily be doubled, making the fiver under sixty grand William Francis is asking for today's test car nothing short of a Billy Bargain. This is, after, all very much the same car.

LITTLE BROTHER

The 997 was, of course, an evolution of the 996 (the first generation of the modern water-cooled 911) and fixed the majority of the 996's aesthetic and build-quality shortcomings. Between them, the 996 and 997 endured for nearly fifteen years. The 991 and 992 generations that followed — while not quite the same massive leap from the air-cooled era — represent another substantial evolution in the 911's six-decade history. This is something that will become more than apparent when we get around to driving the duo of GTS-badged 911s you see on these pages.

As mentioned, there is the 991 factor. Factor it in, we must, because rather like the evolution from 996 into 997, the 992 is very much an evolution of the 991, building on the older model's relative shortcomings to create a more dynamic and involving 911. Key to the great leap forward from 997 to 991 was an all-new bodyshell, the difference between the

Facing page Two of a kind: the 997 Carrera GTS and 992 Carrera GTS go into battle

Above GTS was introduced late in the second-generation 997's lifecycle

two being a hundred kilos in weight, thanks to extensive use of aluminium. Rigidity was up, too. Most significantly, in terms of dynamics, the wheelbase of the 991 was four whole inches longer than that of the 997 — the rear wheels were moved seventy millimetres further back in relation to the engine and transmission, while the front wheels moved forward by thirty millimetres to improve interior space. Overall weight distribution, fore-aft, was little changed, but the effect on handling of a heavy engine slung out the back — modern water-cooled flat-sizes are heavy — was reduced. Porsche claimed the moment of inertia was reduced by five percent, the centre of gravity lowered by five millimetres.

The 997 is, then, the modern-day short-wheelbase 911 to the long-wheelbase 991/992. Of course, shifting the rear wheels back like this was no simple matter, unlike the change from short to long-wheelbase in the early days of the 911's life. That was achieved rather crudely, perhaps, by simply extending the suspension arms and angling the driveshafts back accordingly. As far as the 991 was concerned, this apparently straightforward adjustment in wheelbase meant replacing the 997's manual gearbox, with an all new seven-speed unit based on the existing seven-speed PDK transmission — the semi-automatic PDK system had already been modified for use on the second-generation 997 and was ideally suited to the new application. The system featured an electronically controlled limited-slip differential, reliant of the PDK's oil pump, while the manual gearbox ran a conventional limited-slipper. What wasn't especially conventional, though, was the concept of a seven-speed manual gearbox, with seventh out on a limb, forward and to the right for an overdrive gear, something early normally aspirated 991s struggled to get on top of.

We don't want to get too bogged down in the 991, but it really is relevant to the 992 story. The wheelbase factor is the same, as are essentially the manual and PDK gearboxes. And, of course, it was the second-generation 991 that ushered in the new world of turbocharging for every 911, save for the sacrosanct GT models. Essentially, the normally aspirated 911 died in 2016, when Porsche, like every other manufacturer

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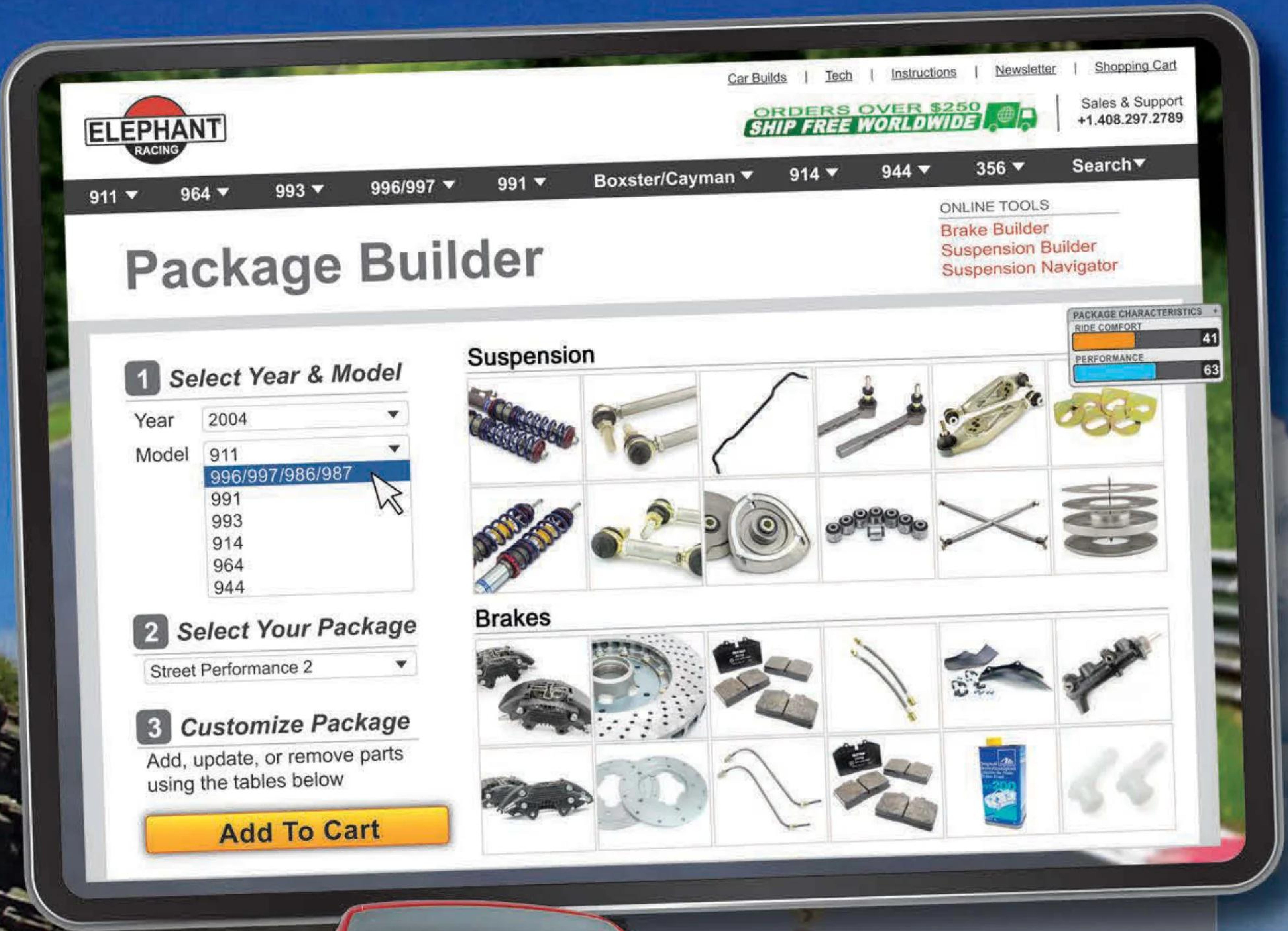

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Carrera 4 GTS

Above The perfect mix of analogue and modern technology

Facing page Built before Porsche decided to make it nigh-on impossible for anyone without a ramp to service their 911 at home

sought to downsize engine capacity, whilst retaining power, all in the name of eco-mandated emissions legislation. The silver lining was that with a turbocharger strapped to each bank of cylinders, power was never going to be an issue, even with capacity reduced to three litres. Additionally, turbo torque did a much better job of driving the intergalactic gear ratios, which were also a consequence of having to keep those nasty hydrocarbons in check.

Oh, and let's not forget the kerfuffle and controversy of the electrically power assisted steering setup, which was another concession to fuel economy. It's all about marginal gains — conventional hydraulic power steering is a drag on power. It's also harder to package on account of the associated pipework. Getting even closer to the truth of the matter, with the advance of start/stop technology, power steering needs to be able to work independently of the engine. Porsche stood staunchly behind the system, but given there is no real mechanical connection between steering wheel and rack, it's hard to equate what's happening as 'chatty steering feel', longer wheelbase or not. Whatever. Frankly, I can forgive all of these so-called advances over and above the 991's frankly hateful electronic handbrake.

GOING LARGE

This, then, is very much the DNA of the modern 911, but the 991 had its issues. Bigger is not necessarily better. By lengthening the wheelbase, Porsche effectively robbed the 991 of traditional 911 character traits. This is to say, the defining rear-engined bias animating the 911 and giving it the swagger and attitude telling you exactly what you're driving. Combine this with less than feelsome steering, and the 991 was more than slightly underwhelming. I confess to not calling it at the time, fearing an 'emperor's new clothes' moment, but after giving the 991 the benefit of the doubt over thousands of miles, it had to be said: the 991 was a major disappointment over the 997, and particularly over the 997 GTS, the best of the 997 range. Oh, and furthermore, the sheer size of the 991 tipped it over the edge for comfortable B-road use.

Yes, of course, there were GTS versions of the 991. This was now a permanent fixture of the model range, after all. The first-generation 991 GTS rocked 430bhp from its normally aspirated 3.8-litre flat-six, while in second-generation 991 guise, the twin-turbocharged three-litre flattie delivered the full-fat 444bhp. Some of you might disagree, but it required serious commitment and speed to animate the chassis. A good job today's shootout

Carrera 4 GTS
HG12 ORP

is not between the 997 and its direct successor, then. And the market does somewhat reflect this reality, with early 991 prices dipping well below those of good, late 997s, GTS or otherwise. This is a trend confirmed by William Francis main man, Charlie Wildridge, who shares an interesting observation. "I've had a lot of customers trading back from 991 and 992s to 997s," he observes. The rationale? "The 997 is a more engaging car to drive." Yep, wouldn't disagree there. Plus, the running costs are lot more palatable. Oops! Are we fast-forwarding to the conclusion here? Well, it's horses for courses, is it not? It's certainly time we did some driving before moving on to what Porsche did to relight the 911 in 992 form. We'd better fire up the 997 GTS, then.

You will have noticed, in all its subtle Meteor (Meteorgrau) Metallic grey glory, this is a Carrera 4 GTS. Does this negate all of the above fanboy praise of the widebody rear-drive chassis shared with the Sport Classic and GT3 RS? No, not a bit of it. While earlier Porsche four-wheel drive setups might have been a bit clunky, by the time the 997 reached its end point, and with the electronic differential and other trickery at play, its influence on actual handling was marginal. Besides, the Carrera 4 GTS features bespoke damper settings. This could very well be the ultimate, liveable, everyday 911.

In terms of specification, this GTS is typically wanting for little, with all the usual GTS goodies in situ. This is a PDK car. If it were me buying, then PDK might be a game-changer — I know just how good the 997's six-speed manual gearbox is. That said, this 911 has had a full PDK service and its big twelve-year service. And there's more: new tyres, brakes and both rear light units have been replaced. For why? Well, as Charlie explains, as fancy as the second-generation 997's units might be stylistically, they are prone to delaminating and are "chuffing expensive to replace," he says, wincing at the still-raw financial hit. Anything else? There is some additional stuff present, such as heated seats and cruise control, another of those things the purist in me would once have derided, but now I find immensely useful over a long journey, staving off 911 throttle pain caused by acute ankle contortion. Then again, this might just be me and my silly long legs.

We should probably mention this car's service book, stamped by main dealers and documenting recent maintenance work (airbag spring, CV joint boots, high and low horns) at Portiacraft in London. There's a new set of N-rated tyres, too.

Above Compared with the 991-generation 911 onward, the 997 feels altogether 'compact', making it the perfect for blasting B-roads

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It's been a little while since I've driven a 997 of any description, the last being a base Carrera, which should have pressed every motoring journo button, but as regular readers will remember, this particular 911 was fitted with the curveball of a Tiptronic transmission, which, entry-level specification or otherwise, I just couldn't overcome for thrills and spills. And there is always that nagging doubt rose-tinted goggles of past glories are clouding the grey matter. What's that about you shouldn't go back? Did I imagine all that sublime chassis stuff?

Let PDK do its thing and the default is to eco-shift to seventh gear as quick as it can. This is fine to warm everything up, but like a PASM- and Chrono-equipped Turbo, there are engine map and chassis options to play with. The best approach is to sharpen the throttle response and PDK shift, while leaving the suspension in standard mode. Sports Plus is just too masochistic for the road.

Immediately, the 997 GTS feels light on its Pirellis and is matched by quick-as-you-like PDK shifts. Yes, manual would be better, but PDK still impresses with its speed and accurate timing. The steering response is super-sharp and the nose feels ultra-alert, despite carrying the weight of a front differential. Immediate, its eagerness is paired with the steering's wonderful weighting and rich flow of detailed information. We were right to call out the electro rack on the 991.

PASM is your friend when the going gets rough, its ability to cope with rapid changes of direction and variable surfaces being typically impressive. The GTS smothers and soothes poorer surfaces, riding over bumps that would have regular 911s protesting. As good as the Sport Classic? The same as the Sport Classic? Porsche neither confirmed nor denied the connection, presumably not wanting to devalue the allure of the super limited-edition machine, but the feeling and connection is strong. Actually, does it really matter?

Above Based on everything we've seen so far, first-gen 992 is a better looker than its successor

Below There's a twin-turbocharged three-litre engine in there

Above As expected, interior features swathes of suede-like Alcantara, but the colour-coded stitching is grey, delivering an understated look

In its own right, the GTS struts its stuff with equal aplomb. On this dry autumnal day, all-wheel drive isn't really a necessity, but anyone who has really pushed a 997 Carrera 4S in sub-optimal conditions will attest, the traction on offer is astonishing. Only a Turbo can cover ground quicker, but that's a whole different ball game.

There's no doubt, the 997 GTS has still got it, but can it take it on a GTS two generations in front? A GTS a whole lot more powerful to boot, with formidable tech and trickery in its repertoire. Oh, yes, and it's got a manual gearbox.

DIG INTO THE SPEC LIST AND THE EPAS IS DESCRIBED AS HAVING A "STEERING PULSE GENERATOR", MEANING ARTIFICIAL STEERING FEEL

There's only one way to find out. Bulging and ripped in all the right places, enter our Agate Grey 992 Carrera 4 GTS.

With just six thousand miles on the clock, this 911 is fit for the fight, having hit the road early in 2023, which makes it a late first-generation 992. It has a shade over 470bhp (thirty ponies up on standard) against the 997's 408bhp. Crucially, perhaps, there's crushing get-up-and-gone torque (420lb-ft versus the 997's 309lb-ft). Price? Yours for a tad under £120,000. When new? Close to £150,000.

The GTS vibe is all present and correct, with a specification list spanning many pages. There is no widebody as such, because all 992s are wide of body. There's wider track than that of the 991, although the wheelbase is the same. Inside, there's swathes of Alcantara and a widescreen display running across the dash, making the 997's Porsche Communication Management (PCM) system look like a portable television from the 1970s. There's also plenty of space in the 992, firmly putting *Gran Turismo* into GTS. Aesthetically, this 911 is stunning. Grey works beautifully on the 992 shape, and the specifying buyer clearly understood subtlety, requesting brake calipers in black, as opposed to blingy red. There are carbon-fibre mirror cases, too. This is the definition of stealth.

Mechanically, there is, of course, PASM, but in lowered Sports specification, plus Porsche Torque Vectoring (PTV) at the rear to animate turn-in. The original owner could have

Above and below
Agate Grey is a variation of classic Slate Grey and looks fantastic on the 992

gone further with other gizmos, like Porsche Dynamic Chassis Control (PDDC) active roll bars, but did at least see fit to tick the seven-speed manual option, which is probably the only point of analogue/passive control there is on this modernist high-tech 911. Really? Well, when every other parameter — right down to the steering — is electronically controlled, then yes.

FALSE METAL

Talking of steering, dig into the spec list and the EPAS is described as having a "steering pulse generator", meaning artificial steering feel, presumably to replicate the feedback and slight kickback inherent of hydraulic power-assisted steering. But hey, that's progress, right?! This is the 911 of the digital age, after all. Incidentally, you can't digitise brakes — the 992 GTS gets the Turbo's staggered (twenty- and twenty-one-inch) wheels and brakes, which is certainly not to be sniffed at.

What of the more animated (over 991, at least) 992 chassis? We will find out, but rewind to the 992's 2018 launch and this was very much the conclusion. Despite the wider track, Porsche's engineers tweaked geometry to effectively 'switch on' the chassis and reintroduce some of that 911 swagger, at lower speeds, too. The feeling was immediate, more so on cars fitted with rear steer. From the first turn of the steering wheel, the 992 felt more, well, more 911 than the 991, even in the steering department. Yep, we've just called out the nonsense of the artificial steering feel, but it did work. I can't say I gave the steering a second thought on model launch drive back in 2018. Today? The steering is all part of the mad mix that is this 992 Carrera 4 GTS. Mad? Well, where do you start with a modern 911? And this isn't even a current-generation 992 with additional hybrid drive, just to make it sound even more futuristic. Let's start with the sheer get up go of the twin-turbocharged three-litre flat-six. Porsche banished turbo lag years ago, and if you've never driven a 911 Turbo, then this is pretty close to

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Above Both cars are prime examples of the high calibre of stock held by Porsche indie, William Francis

'shock and awe', given it will hit 60mph from rest in 3.1 seconds. Consider that for a moment. Top speed is an irrelevant 193mph. It's the torque that does it, though. There is power everywhere and in every gear, making a mockery of the tall ratios, the GTS only really feeling a little blunted in hypermile/overdrive seventh.

The gearbox? It's great to have full control over proceedings, but even so, the seven-speed, manualised PDK is not Porsche's finest. Better than its first 991 incarnation, but not a patch on the six-speed still to be found in the 718 Boxster/Cayman. It's not so much the shift itself, but the weighting and direction of travel across the gate, making it easy to get lost.

Funnily enough, Porsche has seen fit to reintroduce the six-speed for the new 992, or at least delete seventh from the existing transmission. Cross-country pace is seamless, bordering on insane. There's a point where you simply can't keep up, the car way beyond your own processing power. That point is typically on an average B-road, where the speed and sheer size of the GTS is defeated, even if the car itself has more to give.

THERE'S A REASON THE 997 IS THE SWEET SPOT OF THE MODERN 911 ERA, AND WHY IT IS THE LAST OF THE 'ENTHUSIAST' 911s

This is the point at which the 997 Carrera 4 GTS pulls away. Perhaps not literally, but certainly in terms of usability and, for me, desirability. The 997 has as much tech as anyone could ever need, as well as ample power, handling and braking, dimensionally wrapped up in a size totally relevant.

There's a reason the 997 is the sweet spot of the modern 911 era, and why it is the last of the 'enthusiast' 911s. Don't get me wrong, the 991- and 992-generation 911s make for great everyday cars, and there's no denying integration with modern mobile technology and infotainment systems, but in so many respects, the 911's progress has become preposterous. The 997 is a de facto modern classic. The 991 and 992 are obviously not there yet, but a few years down the line, once the inevitable early miles have been racked and they are out of warranty, PCP finance and Porsche Centre orbit, it's kind of difficult to see who they are really going to appeal to. Harsh? We'll see, I guess.

Anyway, there is no ambiguity as to where my money would be going. It's black and white, with no shades of grey. I'll take the 997 Carrera 4 GTS, thank you very much. But then, I think we all saw that coming about 1,500 words ago. ●

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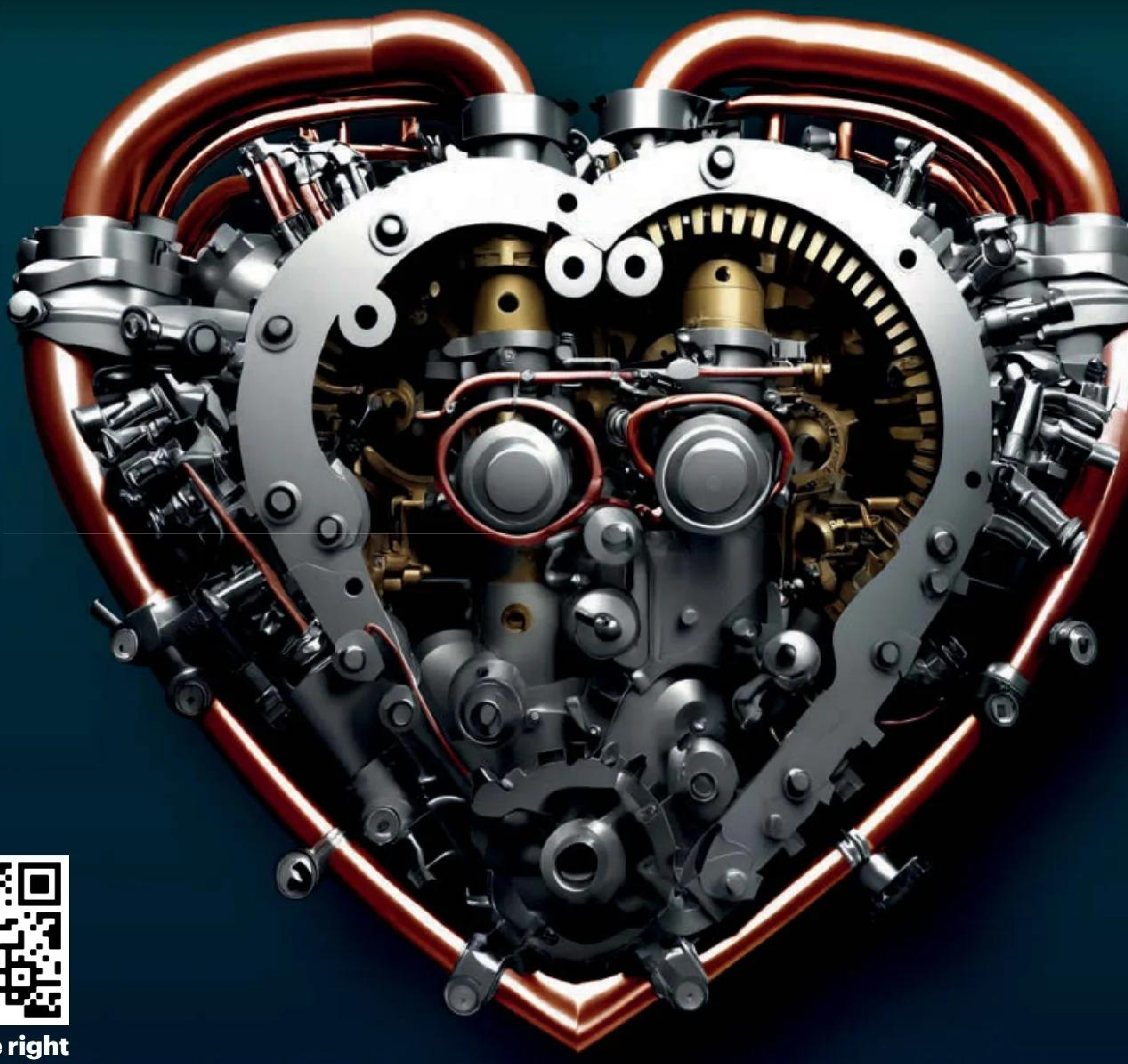

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2025's BEST BUYS

Industry experts pick the Porsches they think should be registering on your radar in the year ahead...

Words **Dan Furr, Shane O'Donoghue, Johnny Tipler**
Photography **Chris Wallbank, Dan Sherwood, Dan Pullen**

Another whirlwind year passes by, with the Porsche marketplace throwing up some interesting propositions, partly due to market forces doing their thing, but also because the manufacturer has launched new versions of every product in its portfolio, the effect being a trickle-down impact on vehicle values, whether nearly new or modern-classic. The good news is that we continue to find ourselves in something of a buyer's market. For example, if you're after a Taycan, the smart money isn't on a brand-new example of the all-electric sports machine, but on the outgoing model, of which there are plenty stuck on Porsche Centre forecourts right now, much to the dismay of Centre Principals. We're not saying a Taycan is an investor-grade Porsche (yet!), and the EV market is certainly not proving as robust as forecasts once suggested, but if you're on the hunt for a new or nearly new electric Porsche, then it's difficult to ignore the buying power showroom visitors currently possess.

As outlined elsewhere in this issue of *911 & Porsche World*, the same can be said of nearly new GT Porsches, particularly the 992- and 991-generation GT3s, which are suffering depreciation as a consequence of manufacturer oversupply and the bubble of off-book pricing feeling fit to burst. It will be interesting to see how much above list price buyers are willing to pay for the new 911 GT3 and, perhaps, the just-announced 992 Carrera T.

Having said all this, when identifying bargain buys for the year head, we're not concentrating our focus on nearly new Porsches, although we found it hard to resist including the 991 Carrera GTS in our round-up of what's hot right now. This really is a brilliant 911 offering a huge amount of bang for buck. There are others not making the grade — our editorial team deliberated over inclusion of the 968 Sport, 997 Carrera S, 993 Targa, 924 Turbo and even the 981 Cayman GT4. All are viable contenders for a star turn across the following pages, but when push came to shove, the shortlist was hard to argue against.

YOU CAN'T VERY WELL HAVE A LIST OF THE PORSCHE SCENE'S BARGAINS AND NOT INCLUDE THE 986 BOXSTER

Some of these cars have become something of a permanent fixture on our annual round-up of best buys. The temptation was to remove them for this reason, but to do so would have made them notable by their absence — you can't very well have a list of the Porsche scene's bargains and not include the 986 Boxster, even if it has appeared in previous editions of this list.

We hope the information we've compiled proves useful when you're making arrangements to take a test drive. Most of all, we hope you enjoy Porsche ownership in 2025. ●

944 TURBO

The coming year marks the 944 Turbo's fortieth anniversary, suggesting interest in the model is about to spike, bringing with it a hike in the value of this utterly brilliant turbocharged transaxle. The model was launched with a turbocharged and intercooled incarnation of Porsche's trusted 2.5-litre eight-valve water-cooled inline-four. Ground-breaking in many ways, the 944 Turbo was the first car to make the same power with and without a catalyst. Forged internals, ceramic cylinder head port liners (one of many upgrades thrown at the M44/51 engine to cope with the Turbo's increased operating temperatures, extra power and harder service life), an uprated transmission with altered final drive, a dedicated oil cooler for the gearbox, stiffer suspension, four-piston Brembo anchors borrowed from the 911 Turbo (930) and the option of a limited-slip differential (as part of an M030 cost-option upgrade adding Koni dampers) formed part of the package. The most obvious difference from the standard 944, however, was the Turbo's appearance. The muscular haunches of the regular production car remained, but the Turbo was treated to improved aerodynamics, including lower rear spoilers and model-specific body-integrated bumpers. At the nose lived the widest indicator lenses of any production car. In the cabin, the then new 'oval' dashboard, which still looks great today, reminded buyers just how dated the standard model's design had become.

The 944 boasted near 50/50 nose-to-tail weight distribution thanks to the front-engine, rear-transaxle layout, which afforded the model superior handling. Moreover, the Turbo's torquey lump and punchy K26 turbocharger combined to outstrip the Carrera 3.2's performance credentials by contributing to top speed of 152mph and swifter acceleration, allowing the dash to 60mph from rest to be completed in just 6.1 seconds. Better fuel consumption also proved attractive to Porsche showroom visitors, who were excited by the promise of 220bhp and 244lb-ft torque. Compared to the normally aspirated 944, the Turbo was a monster. In fact, in a series of memorable advertisements, Porsche sought to demonstrate how far removed the Turbo was from the standard 944 by not only highlighting the forced induction model's

Above If you're looking for a Porsche ticking every box, it's difficult to argue against purchase of the 944 Turbo

IF THE BUDGET STRETCHES...
C5 LHD

Right While 944 Turbos can be bought for as little as twenty grand in the current climate, the very best examples will be verging on the cost of a 968 Club Sport

links to the brand's Le Mans racers, but also to showcase the high number of components manufactured specifically for Turbo production. Later, when forced to work with a modest budget, but looking to give its transaxle family of cars a refresh, Porsche carried the Turbo's styling over to the entire 944 range, which was treated to an updated M44 engine with displacement increased to three litres. At the time, this was the world's biggest-capacity four-cylinder production engine. The big news that year, however, wasn't the re-branding of the normally aspirated 944 as the 944 S2, nor was it the introduction of a Cabriolet to the 944 line-up. No, headlines were reserved for launch of the 944 Turbo S.

Retaining capacity of 2.5 litres, but producing 250bhp and 258lb-ft torque, the limited-run model was the most powerful road-going 944 yet. Not only did it feature a bigger turbocharger than the first-generation 944 Turbo, it also included the M030 package as standard, bringing a limited-slip differential, Koni shocks and bigger brakes to the party. The front struts featured height adjustment, anti-roll bars were beefed-up and chassis stiffening was introduced to the nose-end frame rails. Sixteen-inch flat-faced Fuchs (inspired by the design of the Corvette C4's wheels) were added. Nine inches of width at the rear necessitated arch rolling. Passenger and driver airbags were installed as standard equipment.

Unfortunately, while the Turbo S was the most impressive 944 yet, it was also the most expensive, emptying wallets for DM99,800. Fortunately, patient Porschephiles could rejoice in the fact the S designation was dropped a year after launch and the model's overall specification became standard equipment for the Turbo thereafter.

Tom Vagi, founder of Seacoast Specialist Cars in New Hampshire (*sscarsnh.com*), reckons the 944 Turbo is one of the Porsche scene's best buys. "These engines will last hundreds of thousands of miles if properly looked after," he insists. "Good service history is key, as is good bodywork. Prices are more than reasonable right now. If you're feeling flush, you can secure ownership of the very best of breed for forty grand." Less than the cost of a Carrera 3.2, although edging into 968 Club Sport territory.

"In my opinion, the 944 S2, 944 Turbo and 968 are the best-value Porsches available from fifteen thousand pounds," Tom continues. "Unlike similarly priced Stuttgart-crested cars powered by the M96 water-cooled flat-six, and working on the assumption routine maintenance and servicing has been observed, there is no threat of mechanical surprises with a 944 or 968. In many respects, these are perfect Porsches, offering amazing handling, good power, loads of luggage space, great looks, pop-up headlights and low-cost maintenance." ●

FROM £50k

CARRERA 3.2

Yes, we said the same last year, but the Carrera 3.2 remains one of the Porsche scene's best buys. Fortunately, it also happens to be what many enthusiasts and marque specialists consider the greatest incarnation of Porsche's air-cooled sports car icon. A big step forward from the SC it superseded, the new and improved 911 was still very much an analogue sports car, bereft of driver aids and powered by the traditional air-cooled flat-six. It was, of course, based on the 'impact bumper' G-series body introduced a decade earlier, yet the Carrera 3.2's familiar shape and galvanised exterior panels clothed a substantial evolution in the long-running 911 story.

The Carrera 3.2 was available from day one in coupé, Targa and Cabriolet body styles. It marked the first time *Carrera* script had appeared on a 911 since 1977, but the biggest change was hinted at in the new car's designation: the Carrera 3.2 made use of a 3,164cc flat-six, which Porsche claimed was eighty percent new. The higher displacement was arrived at by using the 95mm bore from the three-litre SC in conjunction with the 3.3-litre 911 Turbo's 74.4mm crankshaft stroke, along with compression ratio of 10.3:1. Bosch L-Jetronic fuel injection and Motronic 2 Digital Motor Electronics (DME) encouraged smooth engine running and mechanical reliability. New airflow pipework joined the party.

Power was up to 231bhp, with 209lb-ft torque delivered at 4,800rpm. This was the most powerful normally aspirated 911 to date, managing the sprint to 60mph from rest in 6.1 seconds, racking up top speed of 152mph. The first production 911 to feature an ECU controlling ignition and fuel systems, the Carrera 3.2 achieved the dash to 100mph from a standing start in just 13.6 seconds. At a stroke, with performance nipping at the heels of the original 911 Turbo of 1974, the 'regular' 911 had gone from sports car to junior supercar.

"The Carrera 3.2 has enjoyed something of a renaissance in recent years," reflects Tom Harris at 911 Virgin. "The 964 and 993 are obviously great air-cooled 911s, but sharp increases in the values of these cars has pushed them beyond the reach of many enthusiasts. Buyers are therefore revisiting the Carrera 3.2. Thankfully, production levels were relatively high, meaning there are many Carrera 3.2s to choose from."

Despite being assembled with galvanised body panels, rust is the G-series 911's biggest enemy. "The Carrera 3.2 is a sound buy, as long as you're satisfied the example you're looking at is solid," Tom stresses. "The sought-after G50 gearbox was an improvement over the Type 915 unit, but it's important to recognise no two air-cooled 911s of the same generation are equal — a good 915 is better than an average G50. My advice is to buy the best-condition Carrera 3.2 you can afford, rather than focusing on specification."

For 1986, all Carrera 3.2s received a redesigned dashboard with larger air-conditioning vents, while the front seats were lowered by twenty millimetres and boasted increased fore and travel. Central locking became standard equipment and, pleasingly, all cars were fitted with the Turbo Look kit, referred to as Carrera with Sport Equipment in the UK. ●

Above Carrera 3.2 Supersport offers Turbo looks without the associated maintenance costs

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986 BOXSTER

No matter how hard you try, there's no getting away from the fact the 986 Boxster continues to offer the best bang for your buck on the Porsche scene. Prices have already bottomed out, meaning you're unlikely to be able to buy the mid-engined, two-seater roadster for any less than it is currently available for, but don't be tempted to hop into the cheapest 986 you can find — excellent examples of the Porsche-saving drop-top are fetching good money for a reason.

"This end of the market is fraught with danger for a buyer," warns Tom Harris, responsible for the day-to-day running of Porsche sales specialist, 911 Virgin. "The low value of early Boxsters, especially base models, means many owners cut corners when it comes to servicing and maintenance. Additionally, cars staying with owners for an average of just eighteen months means some sellers lazily shift their car care responsibilities on to the buyer, who themselves might not take care of what's required. There's also a tendency for low-value Boxsters to be serviced and maintained at general service garages, where knowledge about vehicle specifics is lacking. Sure, you can buy a 986 for three grand, but my advice is to reach for cars at the very top end of the price spectrum. It's likely these are the examples which have been well looked after and which will offer you a more enjoyable ownership experience."

We've said as much before, but you'll struggle to find any standard mainstream Porsche which handles better than a 986, especially on a twisty backroad — the newer the Boxster model, the bigger and less wieldy. Less feedback, too. In other words, optimised responsiveness marks the 986 as that bit more user-friendly than later Boxsters. Sure, tyres play their part, but all the top brands work well on the 986. Simply fit the best and have a spare set stashed away for winter.

Running costs are reasonable, but it's worth keeping in mind the 986 Boxster is the same as the 996-generation 911 from the rear quarters forward, and that the open-top Porsche's flat-six (2.5 litres through to 3.2 litres) is pretty much a smaller displacement version of the unit

Above It's difficult to see how the 986 Boxster will be knocked off its perch as the best-value entry point to Porsche ownership

IF THE BUDGET STRETCHES...

powering the same-age 911 Carrera. In other words, despite the fact you may have acquired a 986 Boxster for a budget-beating price, suspension complaints and mechanical failure is going to set you back the same amount of cash as if you were faced with fixing a 996. Many Boxster buyers fail to observe this fact, a key reason many seemingly cheap 986s are hiding problems their next owner will need to contend with.

UNFAIR REPUTATION

Having said all this, there is some truth to the argument all 986 Boxsters are tarred with the same brush. The easiest way to separate the rough from the smooth is to invest in a pre-purchase inspection from a trusted independent Porsche specialist familiar with these cars. We recommend this over instructing an official Porsche Centre to carry out a dealer-special 111-point check, which is really only a probe of mechanicals. Besides, due to their low value, how many early Boxsters are serviced at main dealers these days? The depth of knowledge an indie will offer is likely to provide far more detail relating to every aspect of the car, from bodywork to engine, electrics, chassis and interior. You'll also want a borescope inspection carried out to ensure the absence of bore score, a common fault on early water-cooled 911 and Boxster engines. Expect to pay between £300 and £500 all in. If you've raised an eyebrow at this sum, consider the fact it could save you a fortune in the long run.

Don't feel pressured into buying any particular 986 Boxster. The massive success of the model means there is no shortage of examples to choose from, allowing you to take your time finding a car matching not only your available budget, but also your preferences in specification, including colour and trim level. Budget between five and fifteen grand, but aim to spend the most you can afford — as Tom highlighted, the best Boxsters command the best prices and do so with a high degree of justification.

If your budget can extend further than the top rung of the 986 ladder, consider a first-generation 987 Boxster. We always recommend the best example of an earlier car over an average example of a later one pitched at the same price point, but with 2.7-litre base model 987s starting at seven grand and the uber-desirable RS60 Spyder (a limited edition of only 1,960 units) variant yours for £25k, there's a huge variety of different engine sizes and trim options to choose from across the 987 range.

If your heart is set on a 986 (and who could blame you?!), however, our pick of the bunch is the near 250bhp 3.2-litre Boxster S with manual transmission. Happy hunting! ●

Right A top-end 986 is a better buy than a low-end 987, but if your budget allows, explore what's on offer from both Boxster generations

FROM £10k

996 CARRERA

Though now recognised as a wildly popular model responsible for bringing the 911 into the modern age, the 996 was the subject of much derision when launched in 1997. Porsche purists were stunned at the inclusion of a water-cooled flat-six, but this was only part of the story — the 996 was the biggest redevelopment of the 911 since launch of the 901 more than three decades earlier.

Factory designer, Pinky Lai, is credited with the 996 shape, working under time-served head of Style Porsche, Harm Lagaay. Though many will remember the early 996 for its historically unloved 'fried egg' front light clusters, Lai and his colleagues were proud of the fact they did away with the somewhat ugly water drain rail running across the top of the side glass, a feature of all 911s up to and including the outgoing 993.

The removal of this detail indicated the 996's body was brand-new. Indeed, Porsche looked long and hard at using aluminium for the body and even for the chassis, though the material was eventually ruled out on the basis of cost, manufacturing complexity and concerns regarding ease of repair. Instead, a large proportion of high-strength steels were employed (hot zinc-galvanised to protect against corrosion, a method Porsche had pioneered), allowing for weight reduction and a shell claimed to be forty-five percent stiffer in torsion than that of the 993, not to mention fifty percent more resistant to bending forces. The front and rear windscreens were also bonded in for the first time, considerably upping strength of the structure, which comprised more than sixty-three percent deep-drawn steel, accounting for the smooth exterior body panels.

More than twenty-nine percent of the structure was manufactured from high-strength steel, including side-impact protection, the centre tunnel, the windscreen surround and longitudinal frame members. Cleverly, the final heat treatment of these components happened when the paint was baked.

Meanwhile, the front bulkhead and side sill supports used tailored steel blanks of varying thicknesses, accounting for almost six and a half percent of the overall steel. These were laser-welded together and then pressed to provide strong reinforcement. Last but by no means least, boron steel was used in the footwells and door reinforcements to increase overall strength.

"We see few bodywork corrosion issues on the 996s coming in and out of our workshop," says Peter Robinson, Service and Parts Manager at Warrington-based Porsche restoration, maintenance and tuning outfit, Ninemeister. "The 996 was better undersealed than the 997," he continues. "Plus, the 996 doesn't suffer as much in the way of bore scoring as the later 911. Put it this way, though I'd recommend a pre-purchase inspection, I would have no hesitation in buying a 996 Carrera today. These are really great cars and can be bought at very reasonable cost." Indeed, a base model 996 Carrera can be yours for between £10k and £20k. Examples with exceptionally low mileage will command more, but then you're in 997 territory. "I'd want a 996 Carrera coupe with manual transmission," Peter stresses. "This specification will continue to rise in value, as it has done in recent years. If you're looking for somewhere safe to park your money, but are working with a modest budget, it's difficult to ignore what the 996 Carrera has to offer."

Toward the other end of the 996 price scale resides the first-generation 911 GT3, a model which has proved itself an appreciating modern classic during the course of the past couple of years. Put it this way, back in 2020, you could easily have picked one up for sixty grand. Now? Even high-mileage examples in need of paint (to eliminate gravel rash) are fetching north of £80k, while super-clean 996 GT3s are fetching six figures. ●

Below The fact you can buy a 911 for little more than the cost of a brand-new Kia Picanto is ludicrous

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PROJECT CARS

Many of you will enjoy the idea of buying a Porsche and applying a degree of personalisation, thereby creating a Stuttgart-crested car tailored to your tastes in performance, styling, in-car entertainment and comfort. While there is little more satisfying than indulging your creative streak and driving a unique P-car, this can also be a very expensive pursuit, often costing more than initial budget planning might suggest. For example, you might acquire a classic or modern-classic Porsche with which to work your magic, only to find the car is hiding problems threatening to eat monies reserved for modifying. Not good.

Though the ideal might not strike you as appealing, consider buying a project car either finished or part-finished. Hear us out. Acquiring a car already restored or heavily modified is likely to save you a lot of cash in the long run. The cost of properly restoring a Porsche can be as much or more than the value of the car itself. If somebody else has taken care of the legwork and the financial commitment required for such a job, you might find yourself able to acquire a bargain, even if the asking price is higher than you were budgeting for. Put it this way, it will be easier and cheaper to undo modifications on a restored Porsche than to pay for restoration and modification yourself. Better to start with a tip-top car and then apply modifications as you see fit.

Arguably even better value for money is a half-finished Porsche project car. There are loads of these around, usually the result of an owner finding they've bitten off more than they can chew and having to abandon the project part-way through. Often in these instances, spend has already been invested in important aspects of the build, such as remedial bodywork, allowing you to swoop in and grab a bargain, safe in the knowledge you won't have to face bills for the fundamentals, leaving you to spend on the Porsche personalisation you always promised yourself.

The car on these pages sits in the former camp, which is to say it's a finished Porsche project, but is looking for a new owner to take it on and apply their twist to proceedings. This retro-

Above Radially overhauled 997 Carrera is available to buy through the sales arm of Border Reivers

Rothmans
PORSCHE
AIR LIFT PERFORMANCE
YOKOHAMA

BUDGET £80k

IF THE BUDGET STRETCHES...

GT3
S GO 5105

Right Consider the merits of parking your cash in a GT Porsche

futurist 'flachbau' 997 is the brainchild of Reflex Auto Design and is based around a slantnose body kit from Japanese styling house, Old & New, which lists the kit at ¥1,550,000, which is about £10,500 at today's exchange rates, not including the hassle and expense of shipping.

IN THE DETAIL

The Rothmans livery and retro stripes have been painstakingly painted using a combination of Ford Imperial Blue, Audi Misano Red, Audi Pearl White and Rolls-Royce Gold. The design really accentuates the lines of the kit, which is made up of bumpers, front wings, rear wing, engine lid, air ducts, rear arches, side skirts, headlights, daylight running lights and a bespoke fuel cap. The transformation over stock is total.

A standard 997 Carrera was used as the starting point for the project, which now makes use of an EMP Performance exhaust, Air Lift Performance air ride (controlled by a 3P management system), Rotiform LVS split rims, Recaro Pole Position bucket seats and a cabin fully retrimmed by Capital Seating in Leicester. Reflex Auto Design augmented the lashings of charcoal-coloured Alcantara by painting the remaining exposed plastics gloss black.

A Forge Motorsport big brake kit, EBC discs and pads, Sparco harnesses, Yokohama tyres and a host of other equipment make up the specification of this eye-popping 997, which is currently being offered as available to purchase through specialist classic and modern-classic Porsche dealer, Border Reivers (visit *borderreivers.co*). The asking price is £79,999, which might seem steep for a 997 Carrera — second-generation or otherwise — but once you factor in the cost of acquiring the base 911, then start adding the price of acquiring the individual components required to build a car of this specification, it doesn't seem such a bad proposition. And if you're worried about a car being so distinctive it might run the risk of forever being associated with its earlier master, then don't discount the opportunity to flex your powers of personalisation by altering the vehicle's appearance, which in this case, might involve custom paint over that awesome Old & New body kit.

We featured this 997 on the over of *911 & Porsche World* not long after the project hit the road. We liked it, but here's the thing: if your pockets are deep enough to drop eighty large on a 997 Carrera, consider the other Porsches in this price bracket. You'll have no problem acquiring a 996 GT3 for the same money. It's not unheard of to secure ownership of a 997 GT3 in this price bracket, either. Add a little more cash to be sure.

Whatever you decide, don't discount somebody else's finished or part-finished project as a cost-effective way of owning your dream personalised Porsche. ●

FROM £50k

912

Regular readers will know how much we love the 912, which is why we have no hesitation in plugging the model as one of 2025's best buys. After all, with the cost of acquiring a mid-1960s 911 now stratospheric, the thirty-odd thousand 912s built between 1965 and model discontinuation in 1969 provide a far more cost-effective and readily available alternative — many of the 911's core components, including the body shell, were shared with the 912 as a way of keeping manufacturing costs low.

In terms of road use, it's possible to wring the neck of a 912 and explore much more of its performance potential than a same-age two-litre 911 — you can drive the 912 at ten tenths, whereas you're probably only likely to explore half of what an early 911 offers before you run out of road or, more likely, run out of talent behind the wheel.

Initially given factory designation 902 (to tie in with the 911's original 901 identifier, which was changed to 911 after a challenge from Peugeot claiming ownership of three-digit model names with a zero in the middle), the car which would go on to become the 912 first appeared in 1965. It fulfilled its maker's brief to the letter, combining the curvaceous looks of the then new 911 with a simpler, less powerful four-cylinder engine. Options explored, but ultimately discounted, included a new engine based on the flat-six, as well a unit derived from the Type 616/16 powerplant used to propel the 356 SC. In response to concerns about the little amount of cash Porsche had to play with, however, a detuned version of the 356's regular 1.6-litre engine became the preferred choice.

The resulting 616/36 featured cast-iron cylinder liners and a finned alloy jacket in addition to a light alloy crankcase and matching cylinder heads. A pair of twin-choke Solex carburettors and low compression ratio of 9.3:1 meant the new 1,582cc unit developed 90bhp at 5,800rpm. This was down 5bhp when compared to the 356, but the 912's engine delivered its 90lb-ft torque 700rpm lower than that of its predecessor. A 901 four-speed gearbox provided the drive, while 60mph was reached from a standing start in 11.6 seconds. Yes, the 912 was off the pace of the 130bhp 911, but the smaller-engined Porsche still managed to deliver respectable performance, especially at a time when drivers in the USA were experiencing enforced tightening of speed limits — at 115mph, the 912's top speed was 16mph lower than that of its six-cylinder sibling, yet the smaller-engined Porsche was faster and quicker than the 356 due to a more aerodynamically optimised body and advanced-for-the-time independent suspension.

Looking at the 912 and 911 side-by-side, it may have seemed as if buyers were being short-changed, but Porsche was keen to highlight how the four-cylinder car offered considerable benefits over the brawny six-shooter. For a start, superior 44/56 front/rear weight distribution trumped the 911's 41/59, while the 912's more neutral handling meant it was less likely to bite at the limit. Helped by its lighter engine and overall weight of just 970kg, the 912 was also more economical, returning close to 35mpg. With a silver rear badge designed to let admirers know they weren't staring at the model's more powerful stablemate — 911s wore gold-coloured emblems — the 912 officially entered production in April 1965. At DM16,250 (£2,466), the 912 cost DM6,000 (£972) less than a 911.

Porsche would soon discover it had a hit on its hands — by the close of 1965, 6,401 912s had shifted out of dealer showrooms. You won't have any trouble getting hold of one today, but keep in mind bodywork and other parts shared with the mid-1960s 911 means the cost of restoring these cars is the same, the only difference being the amount of engine work required. That said, the price of purchasing a decent 912 currently starts at around £50k, a quarter of what you'll pay for the same-age two-litre 911. ●

Below Considered tuning will lift the flat-four's power output to match that of the early two-litre 911, albeit with less torque

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911 (997) "2S" 3.8 pdk (08 - 2008)
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49,000 miles **£32,000**

Cayman "S" 3.4 pdk (14 - 2014)
Black with black leather
53,000 miles **£32,000**

Cayman "S" 3.4 pdk (63 - 2013)
GT silver with black leather
43,000 miles **£32,000**

Cayman 2.7 pdk (14 - 2014)
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alcantara. 35,000 miles **£31,000**

Cayman "S" 3.4 pdk (63 - 2013)
Agate grey with black leather
56,000 miles **£31,000**

Cayman 2.9 pdk (62 - 2012)
White with black leather
18,000 miles **£28,000**

Boxster 2.7 pdk (64 - 2014)
Black with sand leather
48,000 miles **£27,000**

Boxster "S" Black Ed 3.4 pdk (11 - 2011)
Black with black leather
58,000 miles **£23,000**

911 (997) "Turbo" 3.6 tip (07 - 2007)
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AUTOMATIC FOR THE PEOPLE

The 964 Targa remains one of lowest-cost entry points to ownership of an air-cooled 911. Substitute manual transmission for Tiptronic and the price drops further. It's time to reappraise the Targa-Tip combo and applaud Porsche for its commitment to giving people what they want…

Words **Steve Bennett** Photography **Dan Sherwood**

It's the two Ts: Targa and Tiptronic. Add 964 into the mix and you've got – rightly or wrongly – one of the less desirable air-cooled 911s out there. Harsh? The market says not. Apparently, the market is always right, to which we say, well, it's wrong. You see, the beauty of the 911 has always been the fact there is a model and variant for everyone. This was ably proved by the 964. Wanna go hardcore? Get yourself an RS. Want to cruise with a bit of wind rustling around your bonce? Grab a Targa. Don't especially want to play footsie with three pedals? Go Tiptronic. In fact, if both those last points tickle your fancy, a Tiptronic-equipped Targa has got your name on it. Yes, it is a niche model in the range, and we appreciate niche (by definition) means this flavour 911 isn't for everyone, but hear us out.

PORSCHE'S FIRST STAB AT AUTONOMOUS DRIVE IN A PRODUCTION CAR, BUT ALSO ITS FIRST ATTEMPT AT SEQUENTIAL SHIFTING IN A 911

As Kerry Coverdale, owner of our star car, puts it, the 964 Targa Tiptronic is a proper cruiser, but that's okay, because she's also the owner of a manual 993 Carrera coupe with a bombastic Fabspeed exhaust for noise and excitement. Her husband, Simon, drives a 968 Club Sport. This is the beauty of the Porsche range — it is as wide as it is long. Alongside the Coverdale clan's 993 and 968, the 964 Targa Tiptronic is very much niche, but when called upon, it fulfils its very specific roll with aplomb, which suits Kerry very well indeed. It suits us also, not least giving us an opportunity to revisit the whole Tiptronic thing. It's been too long, and Porsche deserves credit for broadening the appeal of the 911 beyond the usual beardy enthusiast stereotype.

This is Kerry's first Porsche. Her father, Richard, is to blame for her passion for the brand. In the 1980s, he owned a black 911 Turbo, the ultimate poster Porsche. Not only that, he was also in the police force, although whether or not he ever used his Turbo to bust villains is unknown. We suspect not. To enforce the Turbo's 'widowmaker' reputation, however, he did put it backwards into a wall. Ouch.

First Porsche? "Yes, blame lockdown," Kerry smiles. Remember that? How can we forget?! I bought a new mountain bike and sold my 996. Others learned how to bake bread. Kerry bought her dream Porsche. The criteria — and this is absolutely the right criteria, because a Porsche should speak to you — was how it looked. "It pushed all the right buttons," she smiles. "The colour, the wheels, the Porsche script down the sides. All of it."

That's how it looked on Kerry's computer screen, anyway. There was a lot of market browsing taking place in 2020 and 2021, resulting in a shift in purchasing dynamics and altered mechanics of selling as the world adapted to a temporary 'new normal'. For Kerry and others, it meant buying cars via online auction, as opposed to doing so in person. While this kind of transaction was nothing unusual, it became far more widely adopted at the height of the pandemic. There really was no other way, though. Besides, it kind of added a frisson of excitement to the car buying game.

Kerry spotted her 964 in the listings of the first lockdown auction hosted by Anglia Car Auctions, based in King's Lynn, not a million miles from where the majority of this magazine's contributors reside. Simon had bought a Peugeot 205 GTI from this Norfolk-based sales house, which tends to attract interesting and quirky lots. Fittingly, as we're promoting the 964 in Tip and Targa form as being entry-level, it's fair to say Kerry won the auction with an entry-level bid. Was this a bit risky, given she hadn't been able to view the car and, like any auction vehicle, it would come with no guarantee or warranty? "I did get it inspected," she laughs. "The guy told me not to buy it, referencing an oil leak. I told him all 964s have oil leaks!" She who dares wins, and all that. "Typically, the oil leak turned out to be the result of failing rocker cover gaskets, so not exactly a drama."

What you see here is exactly what Kerry got: a 964 looking super-smart in Agate Grey, offset by a satin black Targa hoop and Veloce's take on Speedline split rims, which really suit the 964- and 993-generation 911. Yes, Kerry's 993 Carrera is also rocking Veloce wheels exhibiting the Speedline look, as is Simon's 968 Club Sport. Editor Furr's 968 Sport rolls on these rims, too. They're a fantastic way to emulate the look of the 964 Turbo 3.6 and the super-limited-run turbocharged 968s, as well as other rare Porsches, but at reasonable cost, unlike trying to source a set of original Speedlines, which will set you back a fortune, should you be able to find them.

GONE WITH THE WIND

With an honest 118,000 miles on the clock, Kerry's 964 has been a paragon of mechanical reliability, save for the odd gasket and seal, plus a new steering rack. More cosmetic, but crucial to the Targa vibe, is the semi-open top roof. It has an unfair reputation for fit and finish, which is partly why this one has been retrimmed by Bedfordshire-based Dave the Trimmer, whose work we can absolutely vouch for. In any event, a retrim is the way to go, not least because Porsche will charge you an astonishing

Facing page Kerry is the proud owner of this stunning 964 Targa and a gorgeous 993 Carrera, while her husband drives a 968 Club Sport

Above A 964 Targa remains one of the most wallet-friendly routes into ownership of an air-cooled 911

£15,000 for a new Targa lid. We'll pause, whilst you pick yourself up off the floor. Granted, this price tag might make some sort of sense if you are restoring a Carrera 2.7 MFI Targa, but not a 964 Targa, or even same-styled variants of the 911 SC or Carrera 3.2.

Servicing, as well as appointment of the aforementioned gaskets, seals and steering rack, is carried out by Stevenage-situated Renn Works, while the deep shine is the work of detailing firm, Lussivo, whose technicians also applied paint protection film to the 964's front end. This treatment is a must for Kerry and Simon on all their Porsches. Can't argue with that.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

They also like their Porsches to steer in a straight line and handle at their optimum best, which is why all three have been chassis-tuned by independent suspension specialist, Center Gravity. Chris Franklin and the team at this family-run business are Porsche chassis masters, so much so most of us working on this magazine have taken our cars to the company's Atherstone workshops at one point or another. In fact, Editor Furr's 997 Carrera 4S is due to return to Center Gravity in early December following some particularly exciting suspension upgrades, which you can read about later in this issue.

It's all stacking up rather well, this niche, entry-level, air-cooled Porsche, which, let's not forget, being a 964, also makes it the first significantly re-worked 911 since the 1963 original. Yep, this nearly all-new model introduced four-wheel drive, a much stiffer bodyshell, new coil sprung suspension and a 3.6-litre flat-six developing close to 250bhp. The 964 introduced modernised, smoother styling, too. And, of course, Tiptronic semi-automatic transmission, which was not only Porsche's first stab at autonomous drive in a series production car since the arguably ill-fated Sportomatic, but also its first attempt at sequential shifting in a 911. Sure, it might seem antiquated by today's eight- or even nine-speed dual-clutch PDK system, or even later iterations of Tiptronic (ending with the first-generation 997), but on launch, it was a game changer. Worthy of a second look before we drive? It most certainly is.

First, Sportomatic deserves a bit more than just a nod, enduring as it did for rather longer than most marque enthusiasts appreciate — I had quite forgotten it made the leap to G-Series cars after its introduction in 1968. Sportomatic was, in fact, available right

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Above Kerry bought the car through an Anglia Car Auctions online sales event

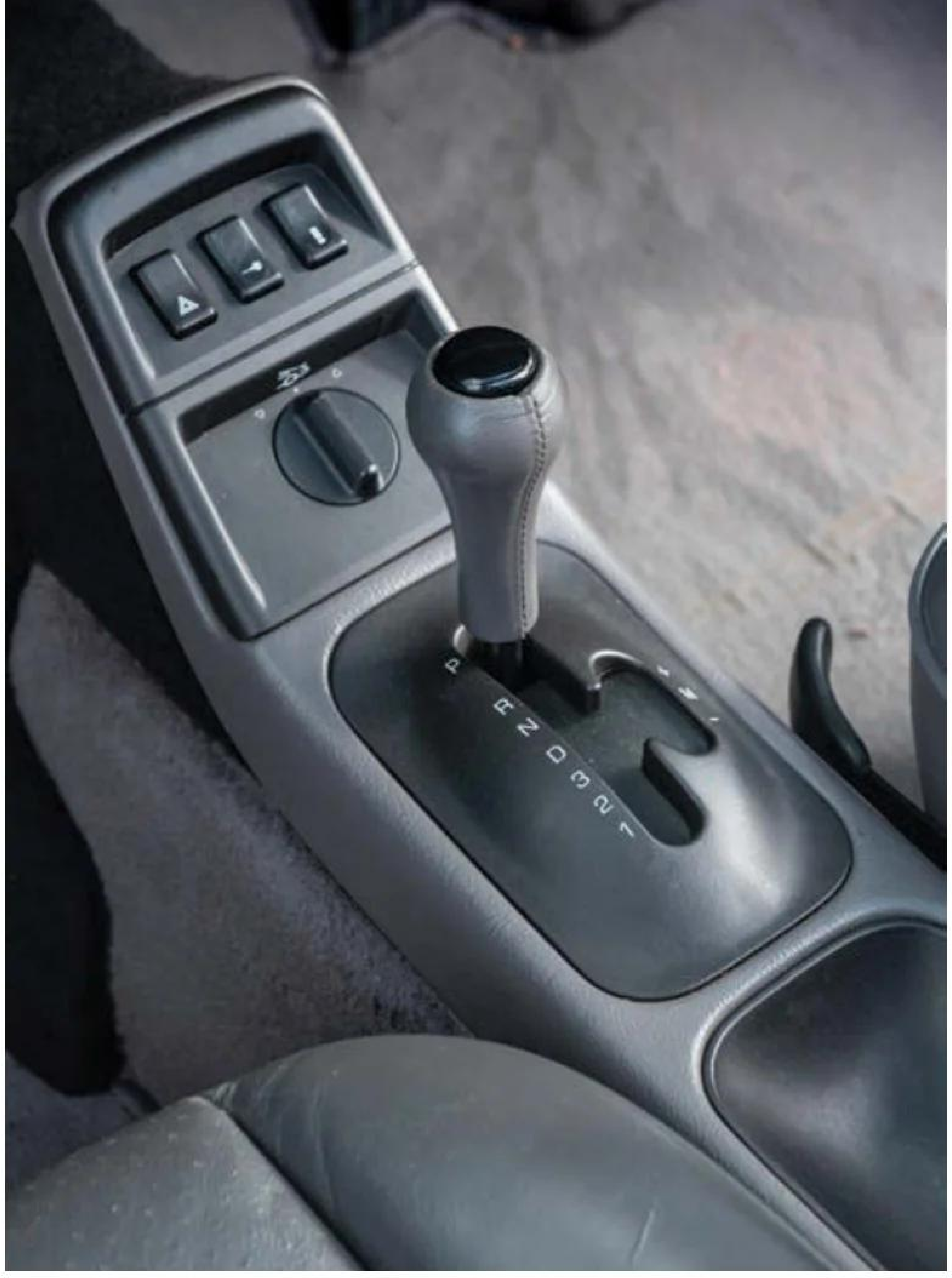
up until 1980. It was an acquired taste, but was certainly clever and ahead of its time. The system was based on a Fichtel & Sachs concept, which combined an automatic clutch with a torque converter and a conventional manual transmission, available in either three- or four-speed guise. The clutch was triggered by simply touching the gear lever. It kind of worked and it kind of didn't.

HIGH PRAISE

Legendary factory racer, Vic Elford, was famously enthusiastic about Sportomatic's abilities, proving the concept in the arduous Marathon de la Route, a three-day and four-night event around the Nürburgring, where he shared a Sportomatic-equipped 911 R with Hans Herrmann and Jochen Neerspasch. In typically leftfield fashion, 'Quick Vic' adopted the Sportomatic concept wholeheartedly and even had a 911 S thus equipped as his Porsche company car. Being self-sufficient when attending European races, he used the Sporto S to tow his caravan. "Sportomatic meant no clutch problems," he later remembered. "I towed comfortably on the autoroutes, autobahns and autostradas in France, Germany and Italy at between 75mph and 80mph. And I always won the traffic light Grand Prix, wherever we were!"

It's not difficult to see how the Sporto's lack of clutch pedal would make lapping the Nürburgring a less stressful experience, plus it aided left-foot braking, but having driven a Sportomatic-loaded 911, I can't say I share Elford's enthusiasm. It's a novel experience, but like so many automatic gearboxes, is held back by its power-sapping torque converter, which slurs gearchanges and, ultimately, progress.

The concept burned bright, though, which is why Porsche, knowing there needed to be an automatic in the future 911 range, returned to the Sporto concept. In a top-level meeting in 1983, the decision was taken to develop a new five-speed Sportomatic "at the earliest point in time, available as soon as possible." Fighting talk, but Porsche was also keeping an eye on developments in the wider world of automatic transmissions. A new opportunity presented itself from transmission maker, ZF, in 1985. The company was working on a semi-automatic transmission for a proposed front-drive Audi V8. Porsche reckoned the setup could be adapted for use in a forthcoming 911, that being the 964. The opportunity to buy a solution from an outside source suited Porsche's accountants. Consequently, ZF came aboard to jointly develop a suitable



Above An early version of Tiptronic it might be, but the cutout in the gearstick surround demonstrates how the user can pull the shifter to one side and 'tip' through gears sequentially

automatic transaxle for Porsche products. Work on the mooted next generation of Sportomatic stopped.

At this point in our story, students of Porsche transmissions will be wondering why we haven't mentioned PDK in any detail. Fair point. As is known, Porsche was developing an early version of dual-clutch PDK for the 956 Group C racer, even trialling it in road-going 928s. It would be the way forward, but not for another twenty-two years or so. It was close, though, with work on the ZF system temporarily suspended while the 964 was adapted to take an early version of PDK, helped by Audi's interest in the concept. It would appear as a component of the mighty Group B 'short' Quattro, but ultimately, Audi decided PDK wasn't quite up the brand's Strasse, leading Porsche to flip-flop back to ZF. The 964's underbody panels were re-modified to suit the ZF unit.

TIPTRONIC WAS CERTAINLY A SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROGRESSION OF THE AUTOMATIC GEARBOX

What exactly constituted what factory engineers referred to as the Type 943 transaxle? Packed into the casing was a four-speed unit, with a three-element torque converter and a lock-up clutch. At its output end, three helical gears returned drive alongside the transmission to a ring and pinion, with differential suitably located to deliver power to the rear wheels. So far, so conventional, but there's nothing in this description deserving of the Tiptronic name. Indeed, the label hadn't yet been coined, but it amounted to Porsche's desire to incorporate some of the work and concepts from ongoing PDK development, chiefly manual override and control over automatic shifting, plus a system adapting its shifting behaviour to driver preference and the detected driving conditions.

In collaboration with ZF and Bosch, Porsche created a dedicated ECU to control the gearbox, receiving signals (lateral acceleration, throttle position, speed of throttle movement, engine and car speed, as well as rates of acceleration and braking) from the ABS controller and the Motronic engine management system. Clever stuff for the time. Interpreting these parameters, the computer used feedback to make a choice between five available gear-shifting maps, from relaxed cruising and economy mode (starting in second gear) to full-on quick-shifting sport mode. To achieve smoother upshifts, the gearbox's

ECU briefly reduced engine torque by twenty-two percent.

The 943 had a conventional selector, allowing the driver to hold the transmission in any of the first three gears, or simply put the system in drive and cede full automatic control, albeit with the setup adapting to driver input. Alternatively, and this was the good bit, the driver could flip the lever to the left (or right, depending on whether the host vehicle was left- or right-hand drive) and adopt manual override, sequentially shifting up and down the four ratios by pulling the lever back to change up or pushing it forward to change down. Game changing? Well, perhaps this description is a bit strong, but Tiptronic was certainly a significant development in the progression of the automatic gearbox. For this, we can thank lessons learned from development of PDK, a world apart from slushy Sportomatic.

GOTTA LOTTA SWAY

The name? Porsche decided to outsource that task to Gotta, a well-known German branding agency. Tiptronic was among three recommendations, and was, apparently, a name Porsche's engineers under Ulrich Bez had come up with, too. It was, then, surely meant to be, and it does rather describe the action of 'tipping' the transmission into the next gear. Y'know, if you really think about it and squint a little (a lot).

Fitted into the 964, Tiptronic gave 49mph in first gear, 83mph in second, 123mph in third and 161mph in fourth. There might have been a bit of a hole between first and second, but torque of the new 3.6-litre air-cooled boxer pretty much filled it. Indeed, in a test with what Porsche described as 'normal' drivers, seven out of ten recorded zero to 60mph times quicker than with a manual Carrera 2. Writing for *Motor*, the late racer and journo, Tony Dron, explained how "the first thing the driver notices is that there is very little of that fluid flywheel 'thrashing' sensation, so typical of old-fashioned gearboxes. Upward gearchanges are super-smooth, just like a perfect manual change. Downward changes benefit from a little help from the driver, by opening the throttle at just the right moment."

Porsche repeated its Sportomatic marketing trick by building a Tiptronic-equipped Carrera Cup racer for the

Below Targa roof collapses down and stows neatly in the front luggage area

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Above Rolling on Veloce replicas of the 964 Turbo 3.6's Speedline split rims

inaugural series in 1990. In testing at Vallelunga, with Roland Kussmaul at the wheel of a manual Cup car, plus the Tip-fitted machine, the latter was 0.1 percent faster, although the circuit was reckoned to favour the gearing of the auto machine. Whatever, further testing on the Nürburgring's North Loop saw Kussmaul within 0.15 seconds of the manual car.

It was recommended the Tiptronic Cup racer be entered into events as a VIP car for drivers of a certain calibre. Enter one Walter Röhrl for the first round on the Green Hell's North Loop, a rollercoaster if ever there was one. It was to be, sadly, a one-off for the Tip machine. Despite a strong qualifying and subsequent starting from the seventh row, Walt was wrong-footed by ABS at the start and dropped fifteen places, the auto racer then never quite in the action against the manual competition, even with its pilot's considerable talent and encouraging times set by Kussmaul in testing. And that was that, notwithstanding the fact the car lives on to this day. It is now in the hands of disabled motorsport enthusiast, Hartwig Rietz, who has converted this unusual 964 to drive with hand controls. Indeed, some of you will remember we had the pleasure of driving this very 911 back in the April 2020 issue of *911 & Porsche World*.

To the present, and some fine roads around Kerry's Bishops Stortford locale. Clearly, Tiptronic was well-received, so how does it stack up today? Does it deserve to be much maligned? Many of the system's critics have rarely encountered the system, or at least not actually lived with it. And if this is entry level air-cooled, what's the trade-off?

For some, there is absolutely no trade-off — not everyone is a self-shifting manualist. Porsche knew as much, which is why an automatic option was an absolute must as the 1990s drew near. I will admit, though, if push came to absolute shove, it would be manual for me. That said, this early iteration of Tiptronic works remarkably well, even thirty-four years down the line. The real breakthrough over previous, conventional automatic gearboxes is its ability to shift under power and for those shifts to work with driver input, much like PDK does today. Shifting isn't as quick, but progress isn't hindered. Get on it, and Tiptronic gets on it, too. It's slightly clunky at times, but you can manipulate the throttle and, as Tony Dron recommended, adding a bit smooths downshifting.

Then there's manual override, which really was a game changer and, today, is still a great conduit for taking nearly full control of shifting. After all, the only thing that's missing is the clutch pedal. When you're on it, the ability to hang on to a gear, then brake deep into a corner and rapidly drop a couple of gears is invigorating. And then, village approaching, or if faced with a bit of slow-stop-start town work, move the shift lever into drive mode and let the car do the work, allowing you to soak up the Targa experience. Maybe I'm just getting old, but actually, it works for me. It works for Kerry, too, and she doesn't hang about, as I discover in convoy, her in the 993 Carrera and me in the 964, which requires a certain amount of commitment to keep up. It's not quite a revelatory moment, but how much am I missing the full manual experience and how much is it hindering me? Well, not a lot, in either instance. Would I be prepared to make the sacrifice of Tiptronic over manual in order to get my bum into an air-cooled 911? It's a tough call, but as a first rung on the ladder, I reckon I would. These existential issues aren't for Kerry. She enjoys this 911 for what it is. Moreover, she enjoys taking it to various events and meets. Next year, she plans to take her Targa Tiptronic touring abroad. I can't help feel she's got the right idea. ●

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TAILORED PERFORMANCE

Offering a consultative retail proposition designed to enable owners to get the very best from their sports cars, Six Four's novel approach to the parts purchasing process looks set to have a much welcome positive impact on the Porsche scene...

Words **Dan Furr** Photography **Dan Furr, Dan Sherwood**

The strapline 'run by enthusiasts for enthusiasts' isn't uncommon in the automotive world, but it's rare for those words to ring true. In the case of Six Four, however, we find a specialist performance parts retailer going and above and beyond the call of duty to inform and satisfy its clients. Moreover, the catalyst for establishing the business was its founder's passion for Porsche and a lifetime spent exploring tuning and vehicle enhancement.

Six Four is the brainchild of serial 911 owner, Steve Bennett. Far from offering a standard store-front experience, he's worked hard to develop the company's relationship-building consultancy service, whereby informed opinion and expert advice (influenced by real-world understanding) serve to deliver truly fit for purpose performance solutions aimed at vastly improving a car's drivability, whilst satisfying a customer's given budget. It's an approach Steve refers to as 'tailored performance', essentially allowing custom configuration of tuning equipment to suit not only the host vehicle and its intended application, but also the buyer's driving style and the environment they're most likely to be using their car.

Before we dig into what this means for Porsche owners, it's worth taking a moment or two to delve into Steve's P-car history, which serves to demonstrate this is a man who knows a thing or two about getting the very best from a 911's chassis. "My first Porsche was a left-hand drive 964 Carrera RS," he tells us. "I followed this with a 993, which I treated to a wealth of Roock Racing components, increasing not

Above Steve's pursuit of Porsche perfection led to the development of this stunning Guards Red 964 Carrera 2 only road presence and handling, but also engine output." Packing 305bhp from a heavily reworked M64 flat-six oversized to 3.8 litres, the car impressed automotive design royalty in the form of British designer, Ian Callum, famous for penning some of the most coveted cars to roll out of Ford, TWR, Aston Martin and Jaguar before starting his eponymous product design company in 2019. Proving the point, Steve's Roock restomod is now in Ian's possession and is 'Callum's keeper'. He told us so when we featured the car on the cover of our June 2022 issue.

THEON, 911 RENNSPORT, NINEMEISTER AND EVERRATI ARE JUST SOME OF THE RESPECTED BRANDS NOW USING TRACTIVE SUSPENSION

Following sale of the 993, Steve bought a 911 SC Targa and, during the course of two years, transformed it into a super-lightweight track weapon with GT3-beating levels of performance. "It weighed just 850 kilograms," he smiles. "Despite being converted to a coupe, every aspect of the car was focused on lightweighting, as evidenced by aluminium door hinges. The engine was built to 964 Cup specification and the body was a convincing replica of a Carrera RS 2.7. I invested in PMO throttle bodies, a beefed-up Type 915 gearbox, genuine Fuchs sevens-and-nines, monobloc 997 brakes, an Emerald standalone ECU and much more besides." This raucous RS-alike was an absolute monster, as discovered by its next owner, a hill climb enthusiast who wrote the car off in the heat of battle.

Steve's next Porsche was a 996 GT2 purchased through independent marque specialist, RPM Technik. "I pushed output to 600bhp and made many suspension improvements, which helped the car reveal its full potential during track time at Spa and the Nürburgring," he reveals. Even so, a trip to chassis tuning outfit, Center Gravity, ensured the GT2's days in his possession were numbered. "I saw a 964 being worked on and decided then and there I needed to be back behind the wheel of this brilliant generation of air-cooled 911." Yep, in case it hadn't dawned on you, Six Four is a reference to Steve's favourite classic Porsche and the flat-six powering it, although it's important to note his company caters for a wide range of Porsche sports cars, as well as performance models from other brands, such as M-badged Bimmers.

A now exceptionally difficult to come by non-sunroof Guards Red 964 Carrera 2 served as Steve's return to ownership of an air-cooled 911. It arrived in his possession from a private collection and was in completely standard specification, down to its Design 90 wheels and 'flag' door mirror cases. During the ensuing half-decade, he worked his way through every aspect of the car, replacing old for new and working with trusted suppliers to develop bespoke performance solutions, including exhaust and suspension equipment. Magazine features followed.

FORWARD CHARGE

Though Steve has since parted with the car and is now the proud owner of a 997 GT3, this radiant red road rocket served as the motivation for founding Six Four, but this is by no means his first go at serving the Porsche community with high-quality performance parts. Indeed, Six Four is the culmination of many years of hard toil developing the reach of hitherto unknown brands on the Porsche scene, not least TracTive.

Below After championing TracTive semi-active suspension following installation of the Dutch company's parts on his 911, Steve established TracTive UK and has served as a trusted TracTive product development consultant

Above Autoart 993 R makes use of parts offered by Six Four

Many of you will know the name of this high-end suspension system manufacturer, perhaps through the various feature cars we've showcased making use of the Dutch firm's hugely impressive semi-active damper systems, but prior to Steve successfully taking on the challenge of introducing TracTive products to UK-based independent Porsche specialists in the business of creating restomods, backdates, competition cars and super-optimised fast-road cars, mentioning the TracTive name would have resulted in puzzled looks. How times have changed — Theon, 911 Rennsport, Ninemeister, Everrati and Paul Stephens Autoart are just some of the respected brands now using TracTive suspension on their bespoke builds, but don't be fooled into thinking it's only applicable to Porsches. Kingsley Cars, famed for re-engineering the classic Range Rover, configures the chassis of its creations around TracTive suspension. The same is true of Welsh rally and workshop tool retailer, Motorsport Tools, which is using TracTive's brilliant systems on re-engineered first- and second-generation Ford Escorts. Then there's the TWR Supercat, a super-GT limited to eighty-eight examples and developing in excess of 600bhp. Some of you will be aware of the fact classic Porsche aficionado, Magnus Walker, has been involved in the development of this Jaguar XJS-based behemoth.

We could go on. The point we're making is that Steve has single-handedly served as a force to be reckoned with in the pursuit of not only promoting the virtues of TracTive suspension in the UK, but he has also been personally involved in the development of all the company's Porsche systems since championing the brand, which stems from his own pursuit of perfection. Ah, we're getting to that 'run by enthusiasts for enthusiasts' tagline, aren't we?!

"I was looking for an advanced suspension system for my 964 Carrera 2," he recalls. "I targeted TracTive's semi-active, digitally controlled dampers as ideal for my needs, leading me to become something of a development consultant for the brand." Establishing TracTive UK and being appointed distributor for the parent company's products followed.

Steve doesn't do things by half. Those of us working on this magazine can vouch for the huge amount of time and effort he has invested in establishing TracTive as a go-to brand where once it was completely unknown. Simultaneously, he launched 964 Race Systems, a producer of premium exhaust systems for the 964 and 993. Again, this venture was born out of his

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desire to secure design and production of the very best equipment for his beloved Carrera 2, where such items were not previously available. Having done the hard work himself, he was keen to 'share the wealth'. In other words, to make these parts available to the wider Porsche community.

Turning TracTive UK from an idea into an admired brand on the Porsche aftermarket was one thing, but with 964 Race Systems running concurrently, Steve recognised the opportunity to establish a new umbrella brand providing not only a hassle-free point of sale, but also the invitation for end users to liaise with him directly prior to purchase. This is where 'tailored performance' comes into play. You see, a regular retail proposition implies the customer already knows what they need and is making an informed purchase accordingly. Sadly, when it comes to vehicle tuning, nothing is further from the truth. With Six Four, you get the chance to ask for expert advice on the best product configuration for both car and driver. And the answer isn't limited to products from TracTive and 964 Race Systems, as we will explain momentarily.

MCS HAS ITS ROOTS IN THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF PROFESSIONAL MOTORSPORT, WHERE ITS PRODUCTS EXCEL IN ALL ENVIRONMENTS

"The process is one of consultation," Steve explains. "Many drivers think they know what will make their car faster and more compliant, but few actually do. For example, some will cite engine upgrades as their first port of call without realising a truly sorted suspension system will not only make the car quicker by virtue of its ability to tackle terrain and corners at speed, but it will also make the host vehicle more comfortable and more compliant, which has the effect of greater confidence in the driving seat and the ability to push the car closer to its limits."

He's not wrong. Any student of Porsche motorsport will know the brand has been victorious in many championships on account of how quick a 911 can enter, navigate and exit a corner, despite being slower on straights than rival machinery.

To Six Four's expanded offering, then. As we've illustrated, TracTive and 964 Race Systems are included, but so is Motion Control Suspension (MCS), a new brand to the UK and Europe, but wildly successful in the USA, where the company's products are manufactured, despite being designed and developed in the Netherlands.

MCS has its roots in the highest levels of professional motorsport, where its products excel in all environments, from enthusiastic street driving to autocross, track days, club racing and beyond. The company's manufacturing plant in Atlanta, Georgia, makes use of only the finest-quality materials, resulting in a product portfolio comprising some of the most advanced, reliable and race-winning suspension systems available today. Hang on a minute, haven't we just been banging the drum for TracTive? Well, yes, but it's important to note MCS and TracTive produce very different products, even if they cater for the same line-up of vehicles. Put simply, MCS produces advanced analogue dampers, whereas TracTive's offering is digitally controlled, hence 'semi-active'.

Obviously, it makes no sense for Six Four to be pitching competing brands against one another. Steve has rightly surmised TracTive and MCS products are tailored — there's that word again

Above Originally a 911 SC Targa, this silver stunner was converted into a super-lightweight trackday monster

Facing page Despite being Motion Control Suspension's entry-level offering, this one-way damper kit is built to the very highest standards and employs the same materials as the firm's high-end product line

Above As TracTive UK, Steve sponsored Porsche Club Great Britain's popular 911 Challenge series

— to different applications. On this note, the consultancy service Six Four provides to its customers extends to recommendations for installation. "It's important this kind of equipment is fitted by specialists familiar with the products," Steve stresses. "TracTive systems, for instance, make use of a dedicated wiring loom, which has to be installed and routed through the host car. There is also the optional installation of a full-colour digital control panel to consider. With this in mind, when a customer orders from Six Four, we will recommend trusted specialists to take care of component fitting."

Other brand offerings available through Six Four include Motordrive seats and Stand 22 competition driving shoes and gloves. Oh, and products from Callum. Yes, the very Callum we talked about earlier. "Six Four offers Callum's carbon-barrelled wheels and carbon-Kevlar hardback sport seats for classic and modern-classic Porsches," Steve says, proudly. "These parts were developed for the recently announced Tuthill 911 K project, but Six Four has license to sell them as individual components." Very nice, too.

The newly launched Six Four website lists a variety of performance items available for purchase, though Steve is keen to stress users can expect a product configurator in the not-too-distant future. This is in response to manufacturers not necessarily providing complementary parts enabling a complete package to be purchased. Suspension equipment is a case in point, where naked dampers might be the standard offering, but this leaves buyers wondering whether they should be investing in uprated top mounts, bushings, drop links and so on. Clearly, requirements will differ from driver to driver, but Six Four aims to eliminate guesswork by allowing touring and race configurations of otherwise standalone suspension equipment to be tailored — and again! — to individual needs. Surely, then, Steve has a hit on his hands? When it comes to aftermarket parts selection, configuration and tuning, not to mention installation, the Porsche scene has been crying out for a personal touch, where we've been used to faceless shop-fronts offering little (nothing?) in the way of advice relating to optimum configuration of performance products and therefore how to get the very best out of the Porsche they're being applied to. Six Four delivers the goods and then some, all with a focus on keeping spend in check.

In fact, Editor Furr was so stoked at this much welcome proposition, he placed an order for a set of MCS adjustable coilovers for his 997 Carrera 4S. We'll be documenting product design, configuration, installation and road testing in coming issues of the magazine. In the meantime, for your Porsche suspension needs, visit *sixfour.co.uk* or email the Six Four team at *sales@sixfour.co.uk* for friendly advice. You'll be pleased you did. ●

OTHER BRAND OFFERINGS AVAILABLE THROUGH SIX FOUR INCLUDE MOTORDRIVE SEATS AND STAND 22 COMPETITION DRIVING SHOES AND GLOVES

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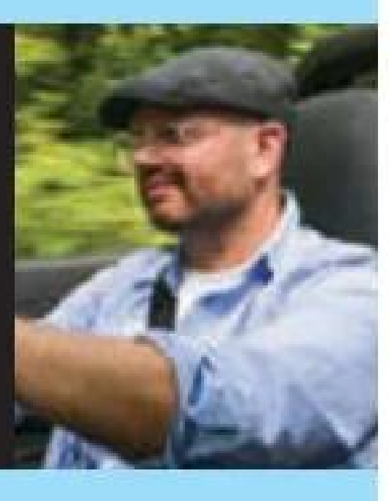
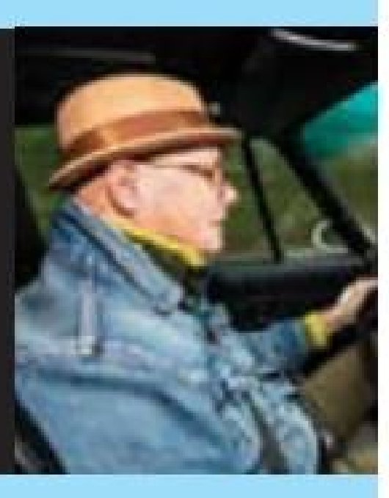


DAN FURR
997 C4S, 968 SPORT, 944 TURBO

So long, 968 Sport. Nice to see you again, 944 Turbo! And what's this? A Motion Control Suspension coilover kit for my 997 Carrera 4S? A busy month for me in Porscheland. Details to follow.

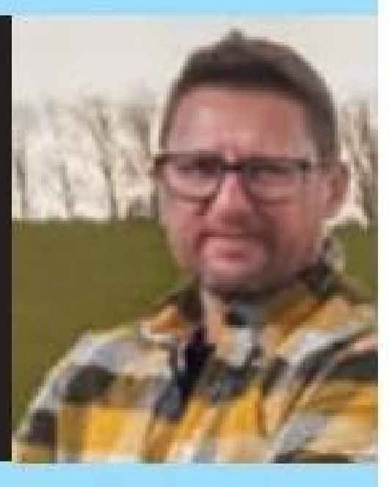
RICHARD ROBERTS
991 GTS, 968 SPORT, 996 C4S

Loving getting stuck into my new 996 Carrera 4S project, bought at a low price and reinforcing the point this is the best-value 911 right now. A huge amount of Porsche for the money, no doubt.



JOHNNY TIPLER
986 BOXSTER S

No sooner have I been reunited with my 986 Boxster than I'm looking to part with it, though through necessity, not choice — a glitch with nerves in my feet mean I'm on the lookout for a Tiptronic 986.



DAN SHERWOOD
996 GEN II GT3

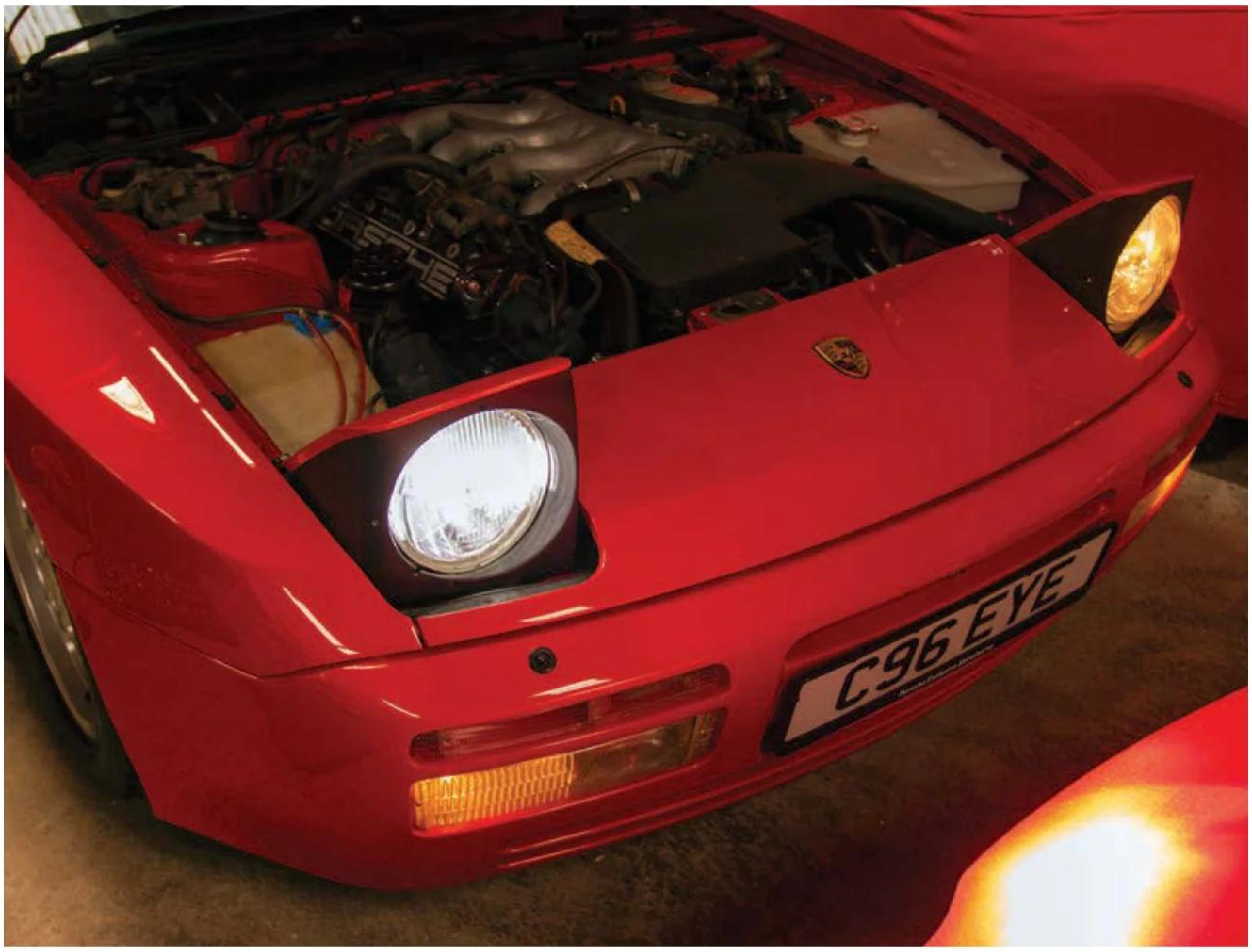
A bittersweet ending to my Porsche ownership experience in 2024 — the car is in much better condition than when I bought it, but the year didn't present me with much opportunity to get out and drive.

CHRIS WALLBANK
981 GTS, 981 BOXSTER S

Enjoyed an amazing and thoroughly enjoyable European road trip in my 981 Boxster S, but now on the hunt for a 981 Boxster GTS, combining the best bits of my Cayman and Boxster in one Porsche package.

ILLUMINATING IDEA

Dan Furr sells his Slate Grey 968 Sport and considers awakening his restored Guards Red 944 Turbo from its state of suspended animation...

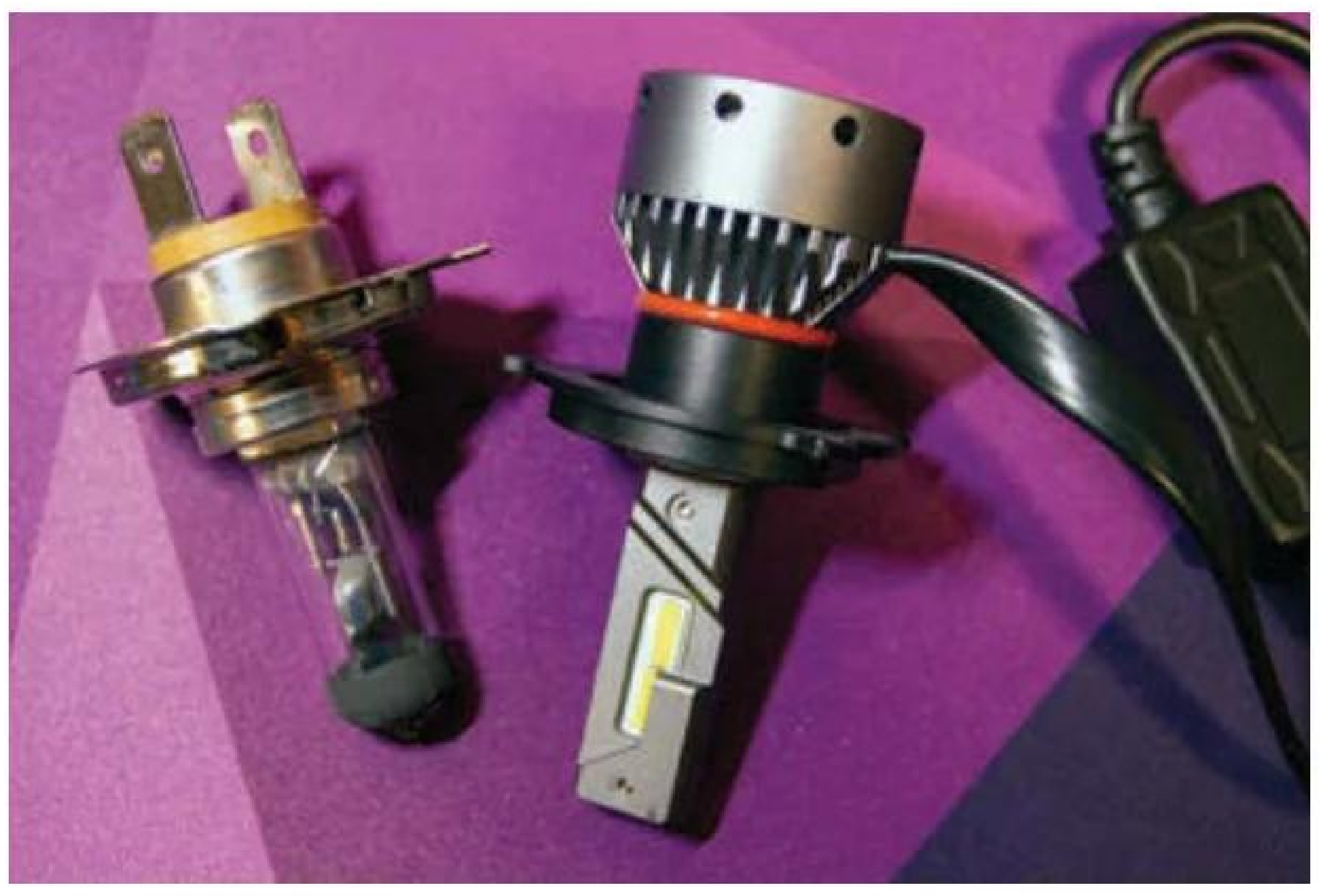


Above With the passenger-side Halogen bulb still in place, the improvement delivered by fitting Classic Car LEDs lighting is obvious

Regular readers will know I recently advertised my 1994 Slate Grey 968 Sport for sale in these pages. I'd been toying with the idea of parting with the car for a while, but found myself guilty of thinking with my heart, not my head — of all the cars I own, Porsche or otherwise, the 968 Sport delivers the purest driving pleasure. Essentially a 968 Club Sport with Comfort seats and a few electrically operated gizmos (tailgate release, door mirrors, windows) appointed to make the car compliant with British roads, the UK-only Sport is one of the rarest production Porsches and an absolute joy to drive, something I was reminded of every time I hopped into the hot seat, at which point the notion of parting with the car disappeared.

All things must pass, however, and announcing the car was available for purchase signalled the point of no return. I received a number of enquiries from readers of this fine publication (what wonderful taste you have), but there could be only one buyer. I'm delighted to report the car is now enjoying time in the company of a 964 finished in the same shade of Slate Grey. What a brilliant pairing. I hope the tip-top transaxle's new owner enjoys his time with the car as much as I've loved having my name on its logbook these past two years.

Some of you will have noted my 1986 Guards Red 944 Turbo has had very little mention in these pages following my acquisition of the 968. In truth, these cars perform a very similar function, albeit the Turbo is loaded with luxury, not least thanks to the comprehensive interior revamp carried out by the team at Awesome Auto Trimming (visit *awesomeclassicandcustom.com*), work resulting in a cabin covered in swathes of sumptuous Alcantara, gorgeous soft leather and colour-coded double-stitching. In short, the result is a take on the treatment Porsche affords new Carmine Red GTS models from the factory. If you've visited my Instagram page (hit me up at *@furrsfleet*), you may well have seen pictures of what I'm describing. Either way, following body, interior and mechanical restoration, my 944 is perilously close to 'too nice to use' territory, meaning hopping in the



Above Expertly designed and manufactured, Classic Car LEDs products are produced using top-grade aluminium and are a true plug-and-play solution, meaning no changing of your Porsche's standard wiring

Middle right The LED lighting unit is waterproof and can be rotated when in situ, allowing for altered beam pattern

Right These before and after shots demonstrate just how pronounced the difference is, resulting in safer driving at night and in low lighting conditions

968 to hit the road was a no-brainer. Incidentally, Awesome Auto Trimming retrimmed the 968's interior, too.

LIGHTS ALIVE

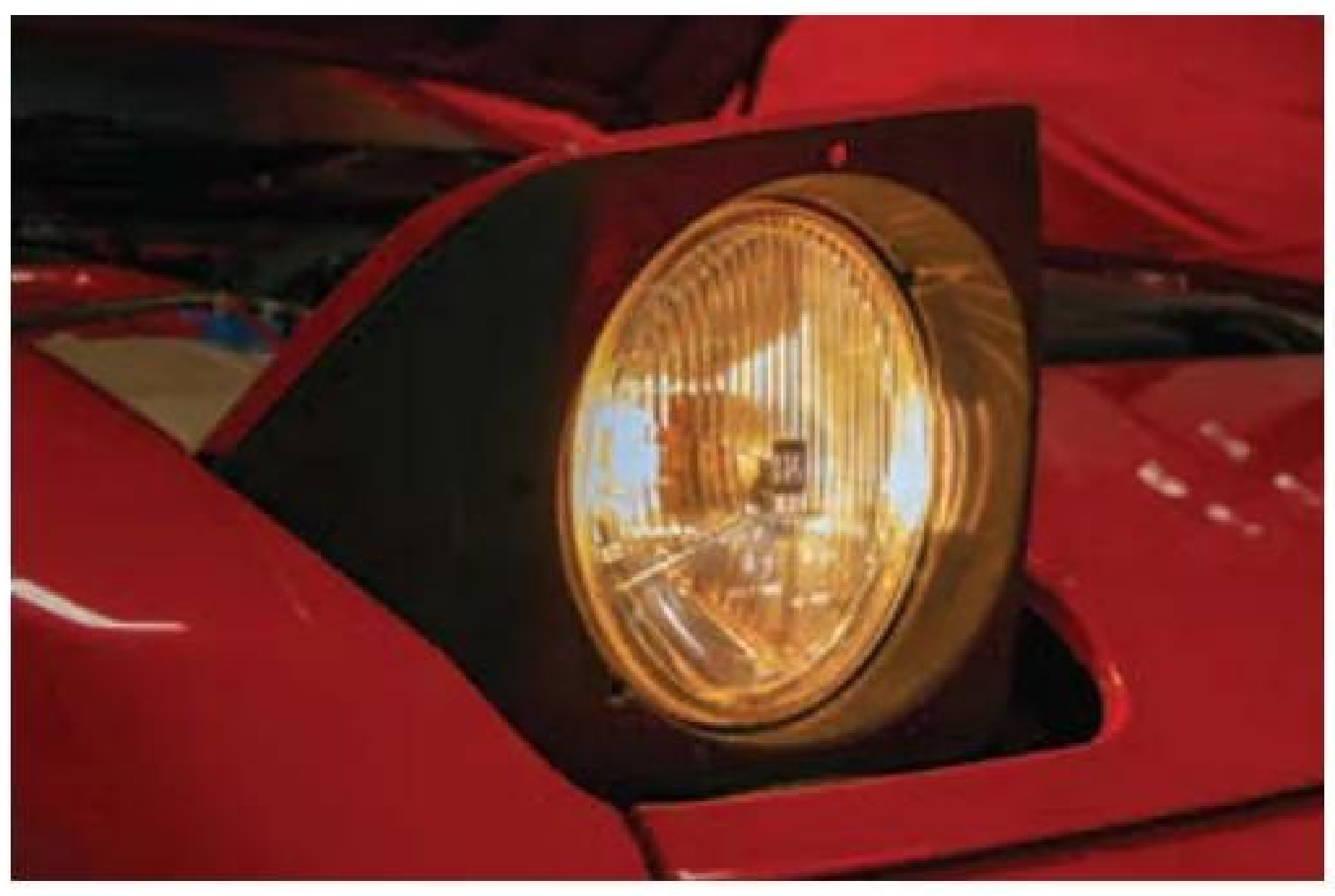
With the later transaxle now residing in pastures new, I'm encouraged to spend time tinkering with the Turbo. I need to address what I suspect is a sticky thermostat, but I'm also keen to improve the car's ability to function (and keep me safe) at night, which is why I've upgraded the car's headlights. The standard H4 bulbs are about as effective as having candles sellotaped to the front of the car, hence my decision to contact the team at Classic Car LEDs.

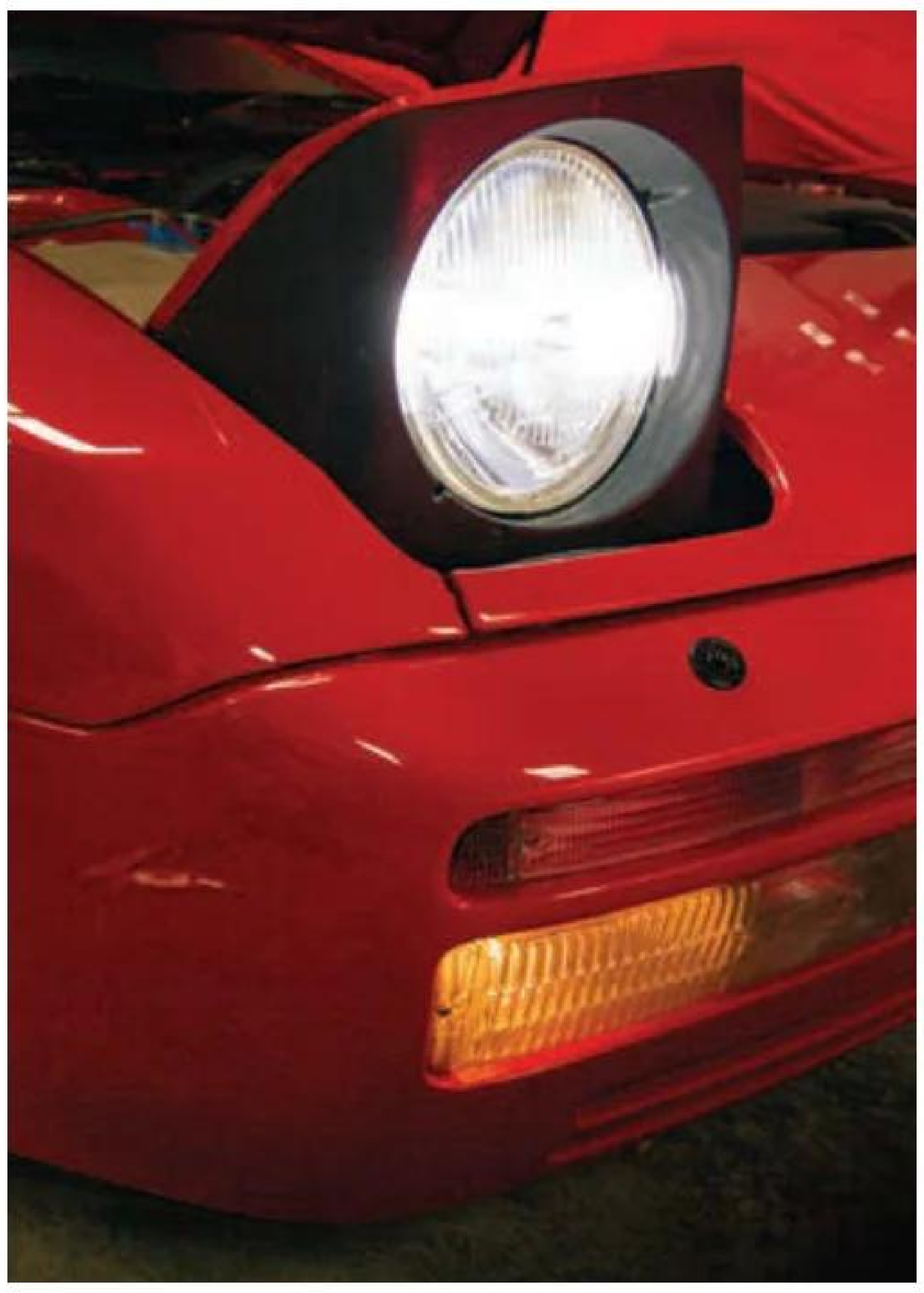
Established in 2014 as a response to inadequate exterior lighting solutions for classic and modern-classic cars, the company has developed a wide range of plug-and-play LED headlights to replace standard bulbs. Incorporating high and low beam, offered in a choice of output (cool white or softer light, the latter arguably more sympathetic to classic cars, although both are as bright as each other), available for different voltage ratings and, where necessary, accompanied by adapters, these products are much more my cup of tea than full replacement LED light units, which I feel can look out of place on a retro ride. By comparison, fitting Classic Car LEDs lighting doesn't alter the overall look of a car in any way.

I ordered a set of cool white LEDs (6,000k, as opposed to the softer 4,300k option), which are a direct replacement for the car's standard H4 bulbs and retail at fifty-nine quid, including free delivery to a UK mainland address. Installation was straightforward insofar as there really is little to do other than remove the old bulbs and install the LEDs, which utilise the very same connectors and include inline control units, meaning no changes to the host car's wiring.

Manufactured from aerospace-grade aluminium and fully waterproof, the body unit for each LED has been expertly designed to resist vibration and can be rotated in situ, meaning you can adjust the beam pattern to suit your preference. Component cooling is provided by an integrated high-performance fan, and as the photographs on this page demonstrate, the compact nature of Classic Car LEDs products is the result of a design intended to more or less mirror the dimensions of the bulb being replaced, thereby ensuring hassle-free installation, even in the tightest of spaces, such as the pop-up headlight unit of a 944 Turbo or, indeed, a 968.

To say I'm delighted with the result would be an understatement. This fit-and-forget lighting solution improves night-time visibility, looks great and is of the highest manufacturing quality. I only wish I'd made the change sooner. Order a set for your car at *classiccarleds.co.uk*. ●





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2025's BEST BUYS

BARGAIN BASEMENT

Carrera-badged 996s remain astonishingly good value for money, but what should you be aware of when looking for an example to call your own?

Words **Richard Roberts** Photography **Ade Brannan**

The instruction was clear: write 2,500 words on why the 996 is such a good buy. What's an additional thousand words between friends?! Believe it or not, I've had to go back and trim what I originally penned in order for it to fit in the available column inches.

Well, with all this space at my disposal, I might as well start at the beginning of my personal Porsche journey, which started in 2013. I wanted a 964 for personalisation (read: backdate). I had it all worked out — fibreglass wings, ducktail, Fuchs wheels and so on. I had a modest budget of £20,000 to play with. Back then, I thought that was the going rate for a reasonable (and serviceable) 964. I looked at loads of cars, most of them ropey. They were poorly repaired, carried crap service history, had been through a high number of owners and/or featured leaky engines. They were the most unloved and unwanted Porsche of the era. I even had Peter Morgan (author of many Porsche books and a man who previously ran a Porsche inspection company) on the hunt for me, the only stipulation being I didn't want a Guards Red 964 with Linen leather and red seat piping. I recall he found an absolutely stunning one-owner-from-new manual coupe with low miles and impeccable history, but I turned it down because — you guessed it — the paint was red and the leather was Linen with red piping. That's an £80,000 car today. Lesson learned.

THE PRODUCT LINE-UP CONSISTED OF THE EXPENSIVE AND LOW-VOLUME 964, THE POOR-SELLING 928 AND THE RELATIVELY UNKNOWN 968

I gave up on the idea of backdating a 964 after seeing a nasty conversion. I started looking at E46 M3 CSLs instead. I'm not going to review the price of this flavour BMW in the present — doing so will make me feel sick, I'm sure of it. My Bimmer fancying was in full swing, but a Porsche caught my eye in the Pistonheads classifieds. It was a manual 993 Carrera in blue. The car was being offered complete with a Dansk exhaust, a Turbo rear spoiler, 'twist' rims and a MOMO deep dish steering wheel trimmed in suede. The advert read well. The car had been subjected to loads of maintenance and had covered only seventy-eight thousand miles from new.

I contacted the owner, only to find he'd part-exchanged the Porsche against a Mitsubishi Evo 'somethingorother'. A week or so later, the same 911, identified by its steering wheel and rear spoiler, popped up again, albeit at a higher price point and at a specialist dealer in Nottingham. I did something unusual and rang the previous seller, asking him to spill the beans.

"It was a great car," he told me. "Loads of maintenance, recent clutch, no oil leaks." Turned out, he worked with an old mate of mine at the Red Bull Formula One team. He also had the 993's original engine lid and spoiler tucked away, which he offered to me free of charge. I then spoke to the dealer, got Peter Morgan to inspect the car (a clean bill of health followed) and did the deal remotely. I then jumped on a train and went to collect my 993 Carrera. I paid £17,000. What a lovely car. I kept it for a year before selling it to a chap who has since become a really good friend. Incidentally, I sold the car for three grand more than I paid for it. For once, I made money on a Porsche. Not as much as the buyer, though — he parted with the car in 2023, selling it for £45,000. I keep telling him he owes me a pint or two.

What's the point in telling you all of this? Look at the current price of 996s. Whichever model you look at, they're cheap, certainly in terms of general Porsche prices, and particularly when compared to the cost of acquiring a 964 or 993. Am I saying there will be a meteoric price rise for the 996? You know, the kind of value hike experienced by older 911s (and some newer ones)? No, but there are reasons for this, which I will come to shortly. The bottom line is these are cheap sports cars, but they surely can't remain such bargains for much longer.

Facing page Rich and Jan paid peanuts for this black beauty, which we'll be showcasing in greater detail across forthcoming issues of this magazine

Above Men and machine in perfect harmony... or something

Just to be clear, I'm not a car dealer. I'm a chartered surveyor who likes Porsches. I'm relatively handy with the spanners and have a history of playing with rally and track cars. If you follow my regular 'fleet' page updates in this magazine, you'll know I own a 991 Carrera GTS (probably the highest mileage example in the country) and a 968 Sport. I have no vested interest in pushing up 996 values, but over the next few pages, I'm going to encourage you to take the plunge and buy one. Beforehand, let's take a trip back in time and look at Porsche in the early 1990s.

THE SECOND-GEN 996 INTRODUCED A 3.6-LITRE M96 AND MORE ATTRACTIVE FRONT LIGHT CLUSTERS, ORIGINALLY RESERVED FOR THE TURBO

The manufacturer's product line-up consisted of the expensive and low-volume 964, the poor-selling 928 and the still relatively unknown 968, the latter essentially a 944 with so many improvements Porsche gave the car its own model designation. The brand was facing declining sales in a global economic recession, with an aging model line-up and increasing competition from other sports car manufacturers, particularly those based in the Land of the Rising Sun.

The 964 brought many technological improvements over the outgoing G-series 911 and had modern-sounding technology, such as Tiptronic semi-automatic transmission, power steering, dual front airbags, a dual-mass flywheel, ABS, retractable rear spoiler and twin-spark ignition, plus optional four-wheel drive and, later, Variocam variable valve timing. Even so, the 911 platform was aging — the 964's silhouette was more or less the same as earlier Neunelfers and Porsche needed an updated model to retain market share. Production came to an end after five years. Close to sixty-two thousand 964s were sold worldwide during this time.

Enter the 993, what many consider the prettiest 911 of all. Maybe, but in my view, from certain angles, the 993 looks a little awkward and out of proportion, certainly when compared to its direct predecessor. Then again, I seem to be on the only person holding this view. Perhaps I have dodgy eyes? Whatever, the 993 had all new panels, lowered stance, integrated front and rear bumpers and a new multi-link suspension system. It retained the M64 air-cooled flat-six, but introduced Variocam shortly after model launch. Like it or loathe it, despite the fresh new look, the 993 was, without doubt, a pure 911.

Road & Track gave the 993 amazing accolades. "Something truly special," gushed the magazine's writers. "A combination of old-school feel and modern usability not found in many other sports cars. Great steering, great brakes, and a wonderfully composed package." The same scribes also suggested the 993 was beautifully built. "A relic from the time Porsche didn't cut corners." And boy, did they hit the nail on the head with that one.

Hang on a second. Didn't Editor Furr ask me to write about the 996? Yes, he did. Bear with me, I'm getting to

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Above M96 has its regularly documented problems, but rate of failure is much lower than forums would have you believe

the point. In the early-to-mid-1990s, Porsche built fabulous cars and employed amazing attention to detail. My 968 Sport is a prime example of the company's build quality in period — the car's rear luggage area is covered by a cloth blind featuring elasticated straps with an internal pulley system to keep tension nice and taught. This is relentless attention to detail. Magnify this approach across all Porsche products and you can see what people refer to as 'Porsche design excellence'. Put simply, the Porsches of the mid-1990s were designed and built by engineers, not bean counters. The cars might have been built on an assembly line with a degree of component sharing (not much, to be honest), but they were literally screwed together. To this end, both my 968 and 993 had the same feel of being hand-built cars, even though I'm sure they rolled along a production line.

THE TECHNOLOGY IS OBVIOUSLY DATED AND THE INTEGRATED SATELLITE NAVIGATION SYSTEM IS CRAP, BUT YOU CAN GET AROUND THIS

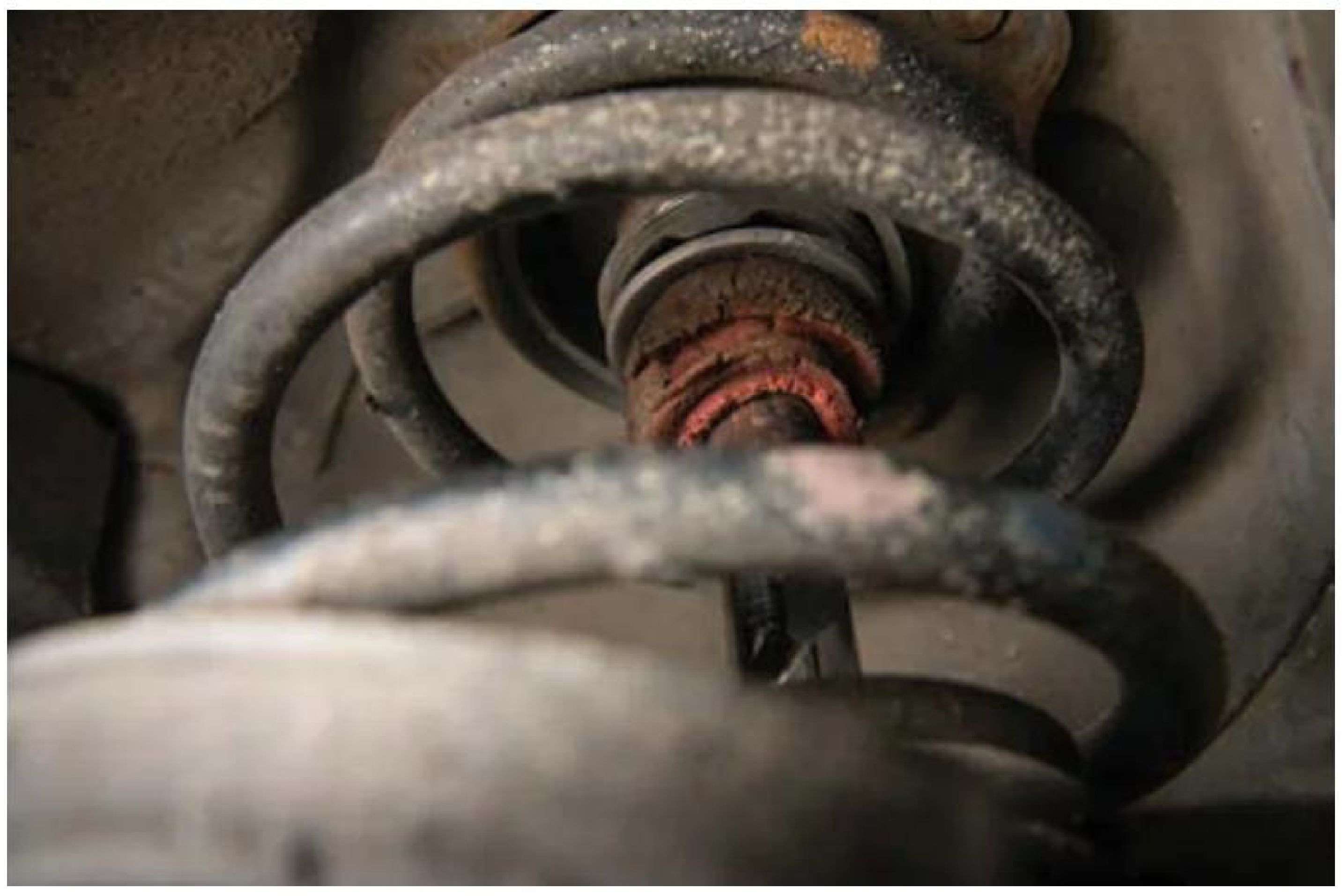
Porsche sold almost seventy thousand 993s. This is similar volume to that of the 964, but over a shorter period. As amazingly well received as the 993 was, however, it had significant problems. For starters, its air-cooled engine fell foul of increasingly strict emissions legislation, plus it was an expensive car to build. And, of course, it was a low-volume sports car. Porsche needed a change in fortunes. Bottom line, it needed to sell more cars and make more money if it wanted to survive long into the twenty-first century.

Part of the company's new strategy was for an entry-level sports car to take on the likes of the Mazda Miata/MX-5 and the Mercedes-Benz SLK. If you haven't read my article about development of the 986 Boxster, then it's worth getting hold of a copy (the January 2024 issue of *911 & Porsche World*, available from *bit.ly/issues911pw*) because the story goes hand-in-hand with design and production of the 996. Long story short, Toyota schooled Porsche on minimising production costs through component sharing and production line optimisation. We all know the Boxster and 996 shared the same bonnet, wings, doors and interior components. Pretty much everything from the nose to the rear wheels.

The 996 was launched at the Los Angeles Motor Show in 1997, a year after the Boxster's launch at Geneva. This 'new 911 for a new era' was offered in both coupe and cabriolet form, with rear- and four-wheel-drive available from the off. Whilst the 993 was a claimed eighty percent new when compared to the 964, there were almost no components carried over to the 996.

This radically new 911 was powered by a larger capacity version of the water-cooled M96 flat-six mounted amidships in the Boxster, but for the 996, the engine boasted 3.4 litres of displacement and produced 296bhp, accompanied by a useful 258lb-ft torque. This was only a marginal improvement over the 294bhp and 251lb-ft from the base 993, with performance figures being equally 'samey' (zero to 60mph in 5.2 seconds, which wasn't a particularly significant improvement over the 993's 5.4-second dash from rest to the same benchmark speed).

The 996 Turbo arrived in 2001. The model's twin-turbocharged a 3.6-litre flat-six produced 415bhp and 415lb-ft, enabling the sprint from standstill to 60mph to be despatched in four seconds dead. That's quick by any standard. The X50 Powerkit became an option on the Turbo in 2002, boosting power to near



Above Rich getting busy with an endoscope in order to determine if the new arrival is suffering from borescore

450bhp. The Turbo S, meanwhile, came with X50 as standard. Among the pack, the first 911 GT3 arrived in 1999.

The second-generation 996 introduced a 3.6-litre M96 and more attractive front light clusters, originally reserved for the Turbo, but rolled out across the range. 2002 also saw the introduction of the Carrera 4S (note, the 996 wasn't offered as a two-wheel-drive Carrera S), exhibiting the Turbo's wide body, bumpers, suspension and brakes, but with a normally aspirated flat-six at the rear. The C4S was also distinguished by a red reflector strip across its rump, harking back to the G-series, 964 and 993. Understandably, the Carrera 4S is the pinnacle of the 996 range, offering Turbo looks without the cost, complexity and maintenance worries of forced induction. In truth, despite raised eyebrows from so-called Porsche purists, component-sharing and water cooling did little to hurt sales of the 996. In fact, 175,000 units were sold in the model's five years of production. That's more than the 964 and 993 combined, all of which brings me nicely back to the start. Or, at least, to my pondering over whether there will ever be a significant increase in the value of 996s? Increase? Yes, for sure. Huge? I doubt it. I can't see a Carrera 4S being worth an equivalent of £80,000 in 2034, but hey, I could be wrong. Let's face it, nobody would have predicted the rise in value of the 964, which, much like the 993, is now out of financial reach for most enthusiasts. Consequently, the 996 is the receiver of fresh appraisal, helped by a new generation of Porschephile looking at this 911 as a true modern classic.

MODERN CLASSIC

Jump in a 996 and the first thing striking you is that it doesn't seem particularly old. Okay, I'm not comparing it to one of the latest fridge-freezer-style electric cars many people drive around in these days, but compared to, say, a 991-generation 911, the 996 really doesn't seem decrepit. The technology is obviously dated and the integrated satellite navigation system is crap, but you can get around this in all manner of ways, not least an upgraded head unit, such as Porsche Classic Communication Management (PCCM). Jump in a 993, though, and you very much feel like you're driving a classic. The biggest difference being the fit and finish in a 996 is just like a newish car. Despite what you might have heard, there are good-quality plastics on the cabin, and you'll discover hard-wearing leather clipped together with hidden fixings

Above A ramp helps, of course, but a 996 can be spannered by any competent DIYer

and trim clips, rather than exposed crosshead screws. The leap from 993 to 996 really was immense.

Earlier, I said the 993 feels hand-built. The 996 absolutely doesn't, but strangely, this is also an enduring aspect of the relatively modern feel of the car, which at its oldest is now pushing twenty-six years. My son owns a 2002 Audi TT. The incorporated technology and build 'methodology' feels similar to that of the Porsche, even if the quality of materials is (mostly) better in the 996.

So, then. 2025's best buys. The 996? You'd better believe it. I can't find the exact number of 996s sold in the UK, but estimates put it at around eighteen thousand units spanning all variants. I'm going to ignore the halo GT2 and GT3 models because prices are stratospheric and, frankly, if you're speculating, you've missed the boat. A quick look at this magazine's classifieds, eBay, Pistonheads and even the dreaded Facebook Marketplace will leave your head spinning with the array of prices for seemingly identical 996s. Some of these numbers are driven by unrealistic expectations — as a serial lurker, you can see the same car available for months and watch the price slowly come down. There are bargain 996 Carreras and Carrera 4s out there for below ten grand, but you'll also come across same-age, same-specification and same-mileage examples some fifty to one hundred percent more expensive. I've seen Turbos advertised for between £20,000 and £40,000, and the Carrera 4S as low as £15,000, all the way up to £35,000. Realistically, you should budget between £20,000 and £25,000 for a good one.

EVEN THE INTERMEDIATE SHAFT BEARING CAN BE REPLACED BY A HOME MECHANIC WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS, WHICH CAN BE BOUGHT OR HIRED

Real Porsches are manual, right? If this is your point of view, it might come as a surprise to learn the manual 996 and its Tiptronic counterpart sold in roughly equal numbers. How can this be? Surely, Tiptronic (S, dictating a new generation of this semi-automatic transmission, accompanied by steering wheel controls) is awful? Well, no, actually. It isn't. Granted, it's far from PDK, but Tiptronic provides spirited performance suiting the 996 well. It also makes the 911 a lot easier to live with in today's traffic. I must admit, I've told people to steer clear of Tiptronic in the past, but that was before I spent time driving a Porsche loaded with the system. I take back what I said — awful, Tiptronic is not, especially if the gearbox has been serviced and is in fine fettle.

As with all Porsches of this era, check for accident damage. It's wise to invest in an independent inspection from a mobile Porsche specialist, such as Nick Giles (visit *nickgiles-car-inspection.co.uk*). Poor paintwork, irregular panel fit, overspray on rubbers and cracked bumpers are a clear giveaway of not only a hard life, but also a less than fastidious owner. I recently looked at a 996 cabriolet displaying a bumper held on with mastic. Yeesh.

Evidence of regular servicing is important, of course, but I'm not going to say Porsche Centre and/or specialist history is a must. The car just needs to have the right oil at correct intervals. And let's face it, pretty much any of us can change the oil on a 911, can't we? All 12.5 litres of the stuff, in fact. What's this? DIYing a 911? Indeed, which brings me nicely to an important point at this end of the 911 market: a competent DIYer can do a lot of work on a 996, just like they can on a Boxster, but if you're doing an oil change, just make sure your bucket is big enough!

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Above Rich rightly recognises the C4S as pick of the 996 line-up, offering all the comfort and look of the Turbo, but without the associated complexity and running cost of forced induction

Wisdom would have you spend the most you can afford on the best, lowest-mileage 996 you can find, preferably buying from the proverbial 'one lady owner from new'. I'm going to say the same as when I wrote my Boxster article: don't automatically assume this will get you a trouble-free car. Like all Porsches, the 996 needs to be driven regularly to ensure its mechanicals are kept on-song. Spend half an hour on Porsche forums, however, and you'll run for the hills, worried about a multitude of issues. Rear Main Seal (RMS), cracked heads, rusty exhaust box seams, corroded clamps and studs, seized rear suspension adjusters, knackered bushes, busted top mounts, failed air-conditioning radiators. To be honest, other than parts specific to the Porsche engine location, all other complaints are pretty much the same as any other car of the era.

This brings us back to the point I made about a competent DIYer being able to keep a 996 in good order. Even the dreaded Intermediate Shaft (IMS) bearing can be replaced by a home mechanic with the right tools, which can be bought or hired. IMS failure is one of the first things you'll read about when Googling 996 issues, but in reality, failure rates are minuscule and most affected engines have had the problem fixed.

The elephant in the room is bore scoring. Again, there are a multitude of theories as to why this is encouraged. They range from short journeys, to not warming up the car correctly, poor maintenance and infrequent oil changes. There are model years more susceptible to the problem than others, but the issue can easily be detected by the layman — listen out for ticking on idle and a sooty tailpipe. The only way to be sure whether borescore is an issue is to whip out the spark plugs and have a look with an endoscope (budget fifty quid).

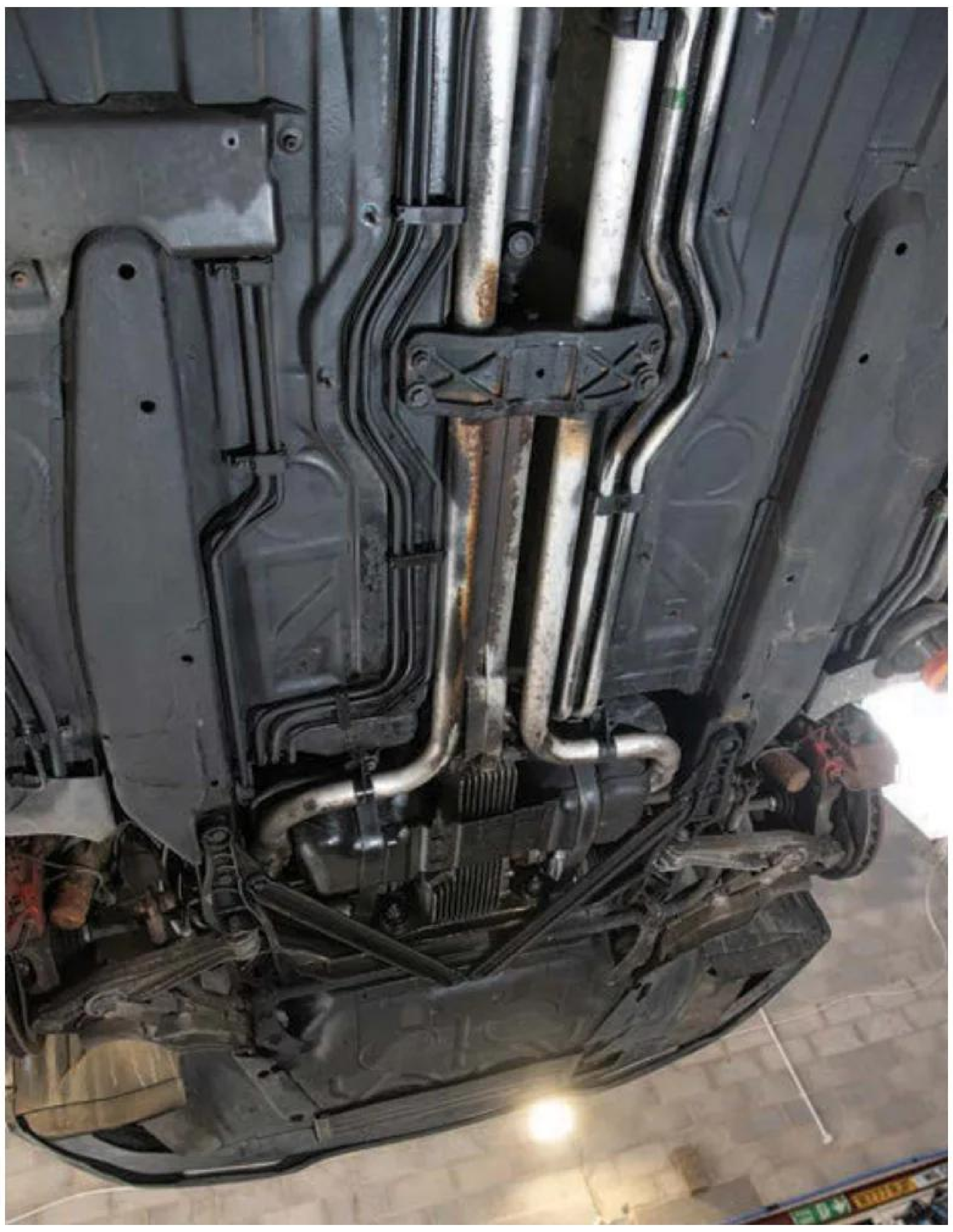
If the 996 you're thinking about buying is suffering from bore score, you'll see visible scratches on the cylinder bore. This increases piston wear and oil consumption. There is only one solution: a full engine rebuild. Then again, perhaps you could buy a known good replacement flat-six? Used M96s change hands for between five and seven grand. An engine rebuild will probably be in the region of ten to twelve, providing there are serviceable parts to reuse, else the work could cost a lot more.

There are also capacity increases available, not least Hartech's 4.1-litre and EcoPower upgrades, with power and torque increases across the board. Would I buy a 996 without inspecting it for bore score? Well, there's a bit of a story there.

FUEL CONSUMPTION CAN BE A LITTLE SCARY, WITH FIGURES IN THE HIGH TEENS TO LOW TWENTIES, DEPENDING ON HOW MUCH OF THE REV RANGE YOU USE

You may have read the recent *Tale of Two Boxsters* article in this magazine, where my mate, Jan, ended up with two 986s for the price of, er, one and a half. We were chatting about 996s and marvelling at the Carrera range's rock-bottom pricing. We both agreed the Mezger-engined Turbo, which doesn't suffer the complaints of an M96, would be great as our next project Porsche, but in the absence of forced induction, the 996 to have is the Carrera 4S — big hips, Turbo brakes, Turbo suspension, that lovely rear reflector and four-wheel-drive.

We sank a few beers and found ourselves scanning the usual



Above New brake lines are at the top of the team's to-do list

marketplaces. What we found was quite unexpected — wind the clock forward and, after several weeks of bartering, we picked up the 2002 Carrera 4S you see on these pages. It has covered a tad over 100,000 miles, most of them racked up early in the car's life. There has been a relatively low number of owners, good bodywork and *almost* matching tyres. Oh, and there's no way of sugar-coating this, but this 996 is equipped with Tiptronic transmission.

Overall, this 911 is in relatively good shape, apart from all the things you can think of that would be wrong with a twenty-two-year-old 911 with more than a hundred thousand miles on the clock. Jan and I were both a little nervous when the car had its first lift on a ramp during our ownership, but the car is relatively clean underneath, most of the oil is in the engine and the only obvious issue is that the car will need brake lines at some point in the near future.

The first test drive highlighted a whining front differential and sluggish Tiptronic gear change, but I think the latter can be sorted with fresh transmission fluid and a new filter. The differential, on the other hand, will need more exhaustive work. Worst case, a new one is available direct from Porsche for around £8,000. We'll fit a new set of bearings and see how the car performs thereafter. Fingers crossed.

The suspension squeaky and there's a slight leak from the transmission oil cooler, but other than these errors, all appears to be okay. So far, so good.

What does the car drive like? It goes like a 911, of course! It sounds raw thanks to a Spyder Performance exhaust system with the valves seized open. It feels tight and well put together, despite the mileage. I should stress, I've been using the car sparingly until we can sort the differential. Other than the aged technology, this would be perfectly usable as an everyday car. I'm positive it would be capable of covering long distances without the drive feeling like a massive chore.

Fuel consumption can be a little scary, with figures in the high teens to low twenties, depending on how much of the rev range you want to use. The overwhelming feeling is of quality and surefooted performance, the kind you could live with every day or for spirited blasts at weekends. The 996 is such amazing value for money, and our Carrera 4S was very cheap indeed. I'll be sharing more details of the project in forthcoming issues of this magazine across the coming months. In the meantime, I urge you to start looking for a 996 to call your own. They won't stay cheap forever. ●

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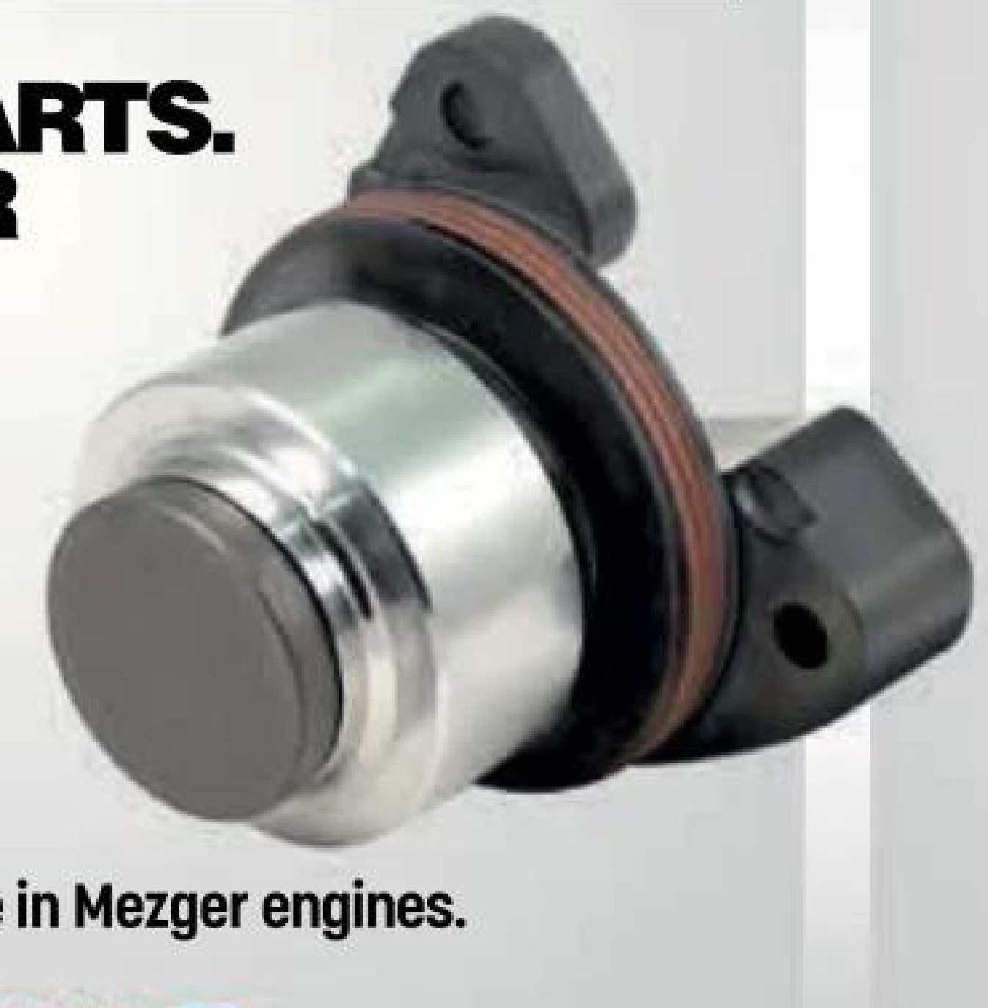

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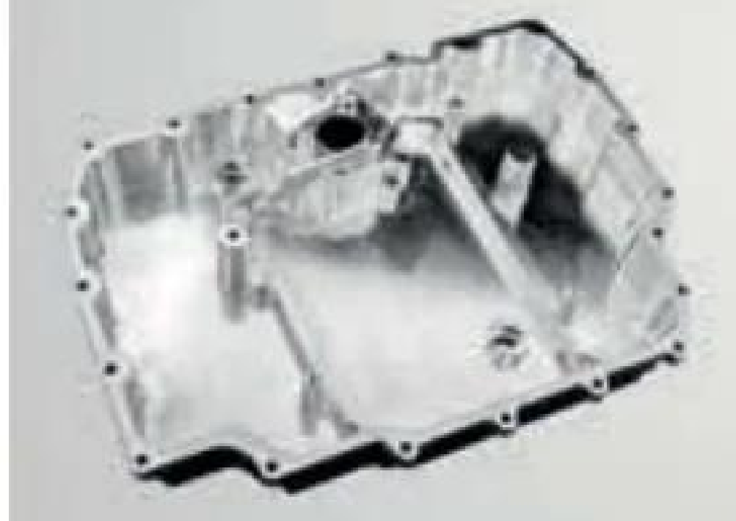

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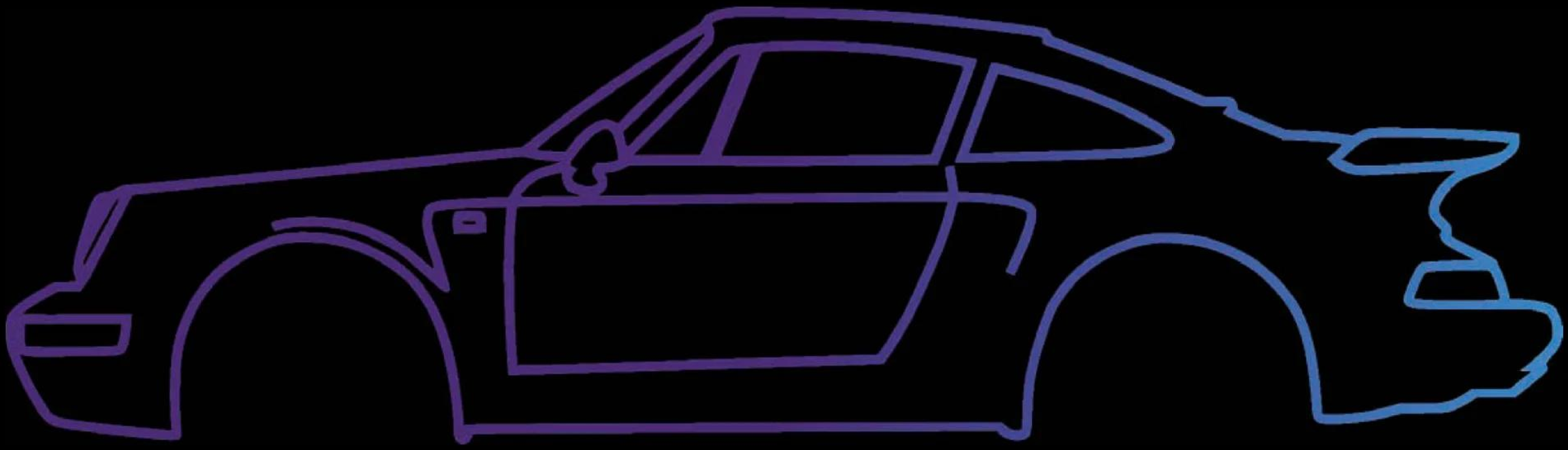

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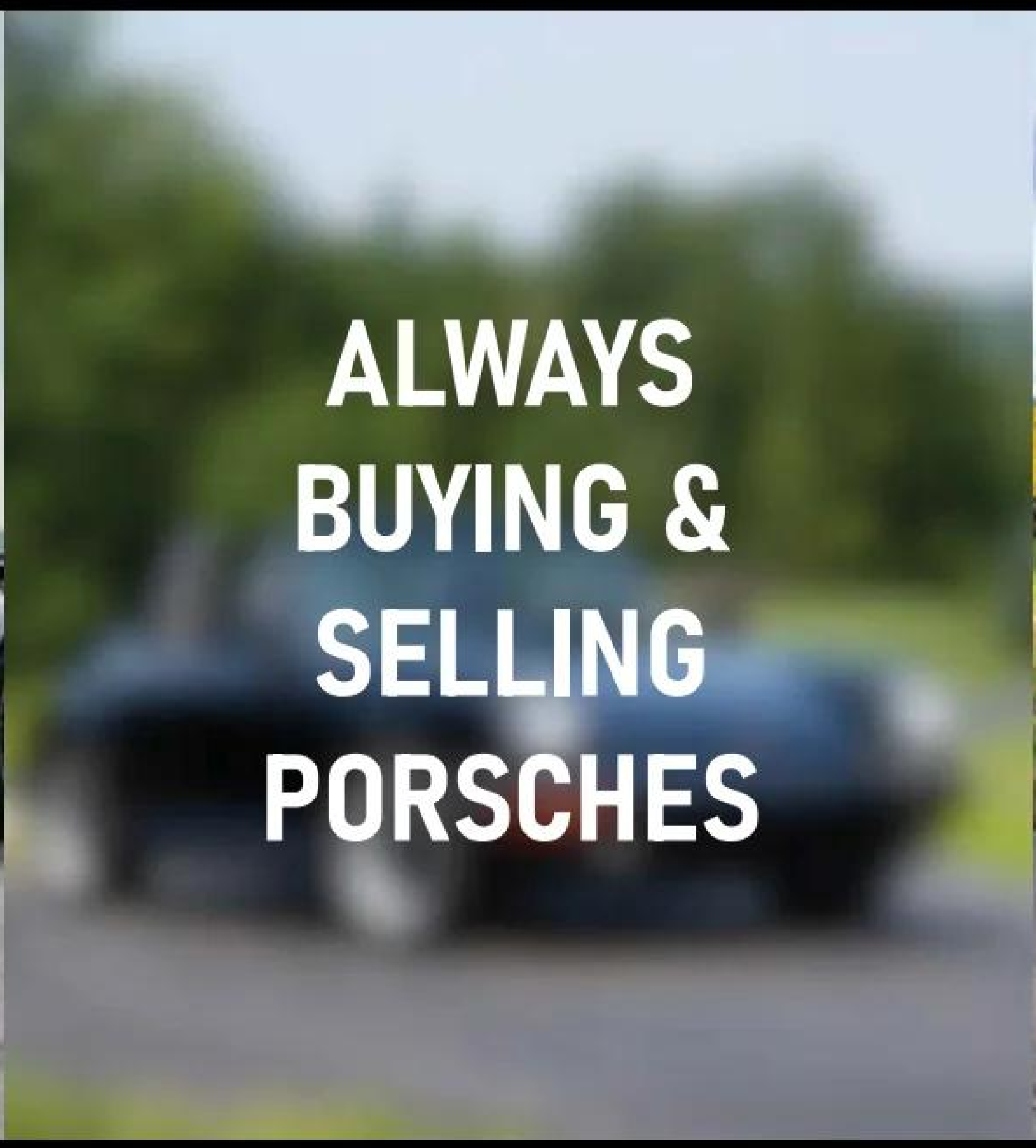

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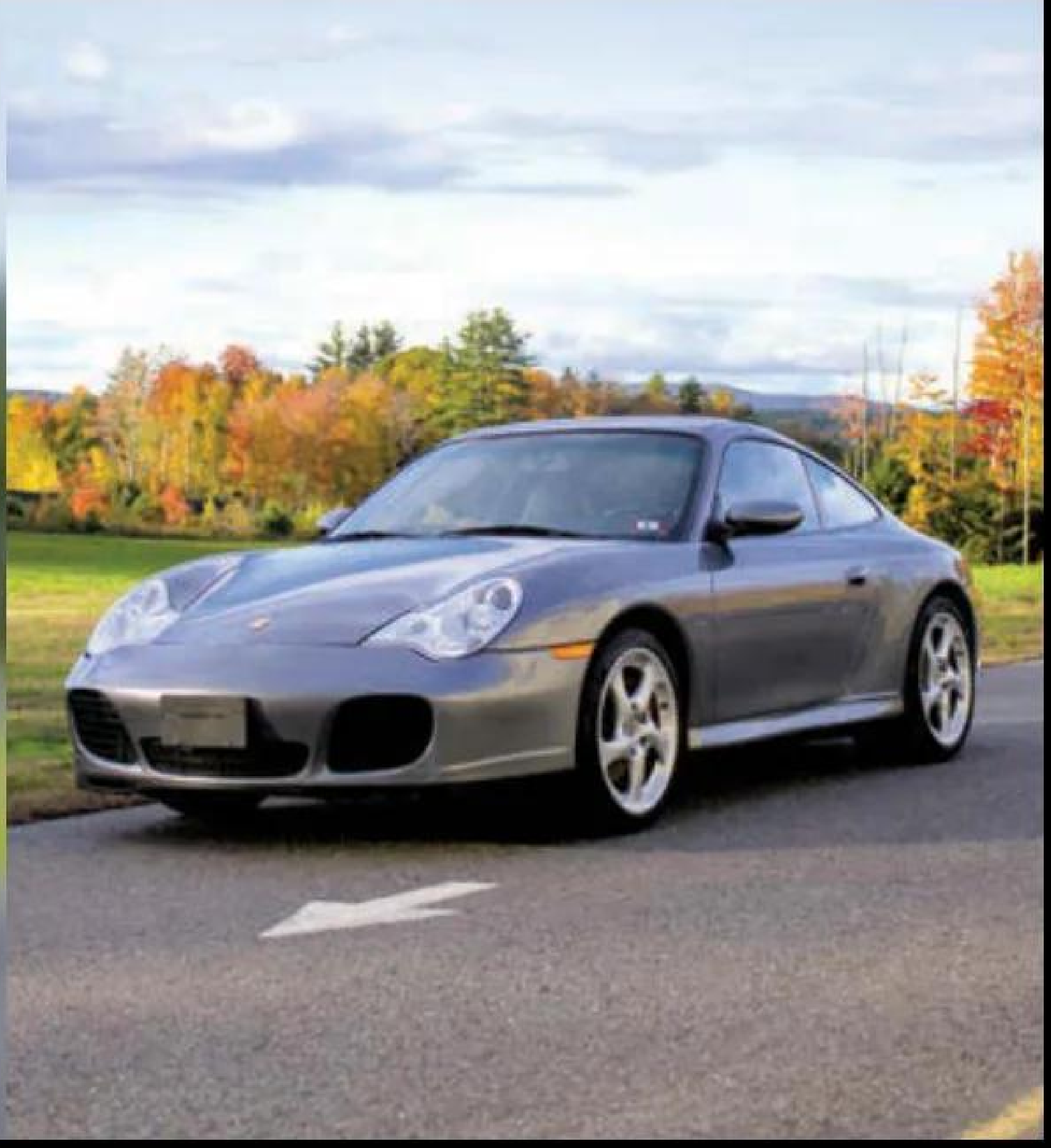

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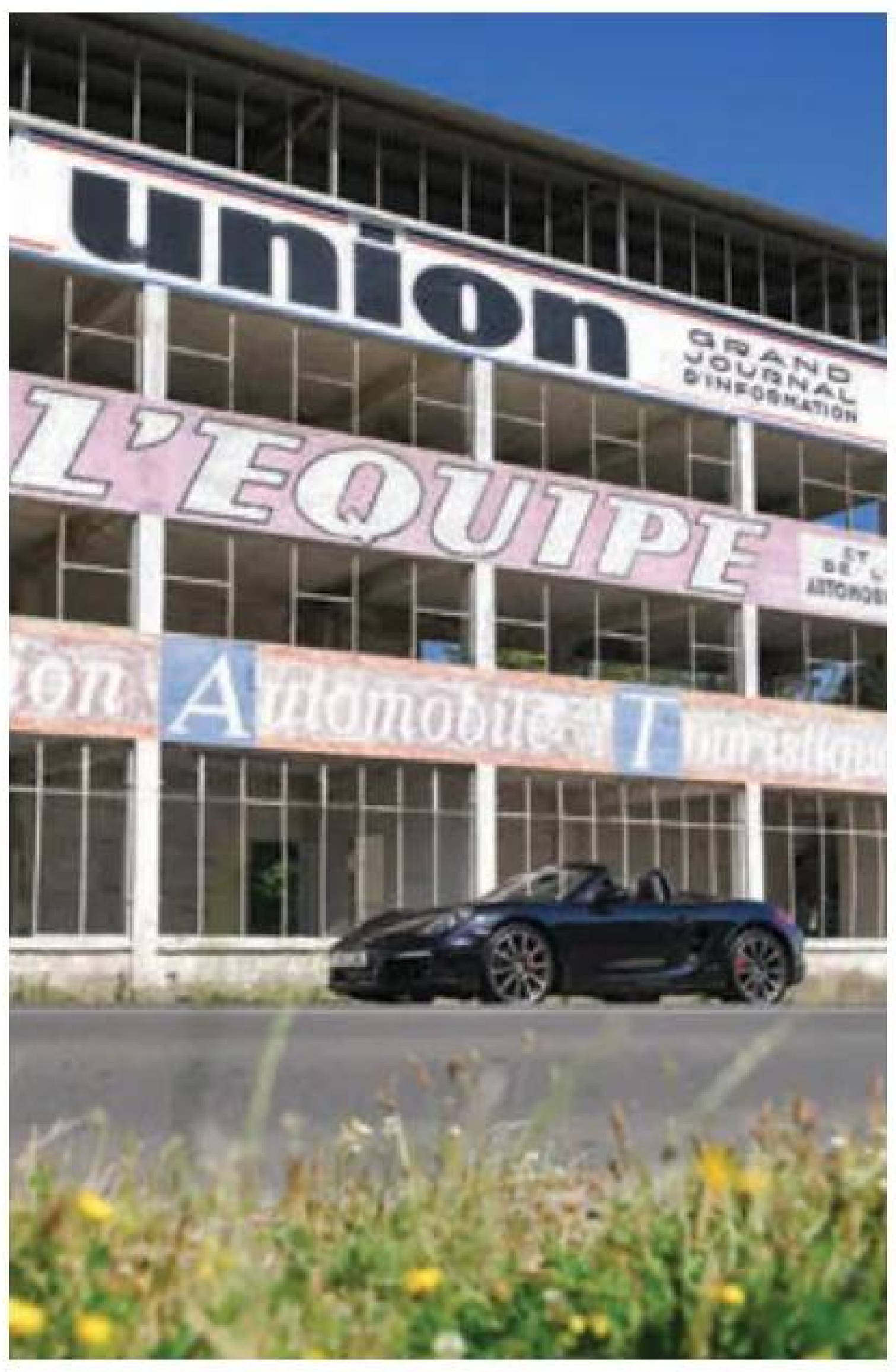
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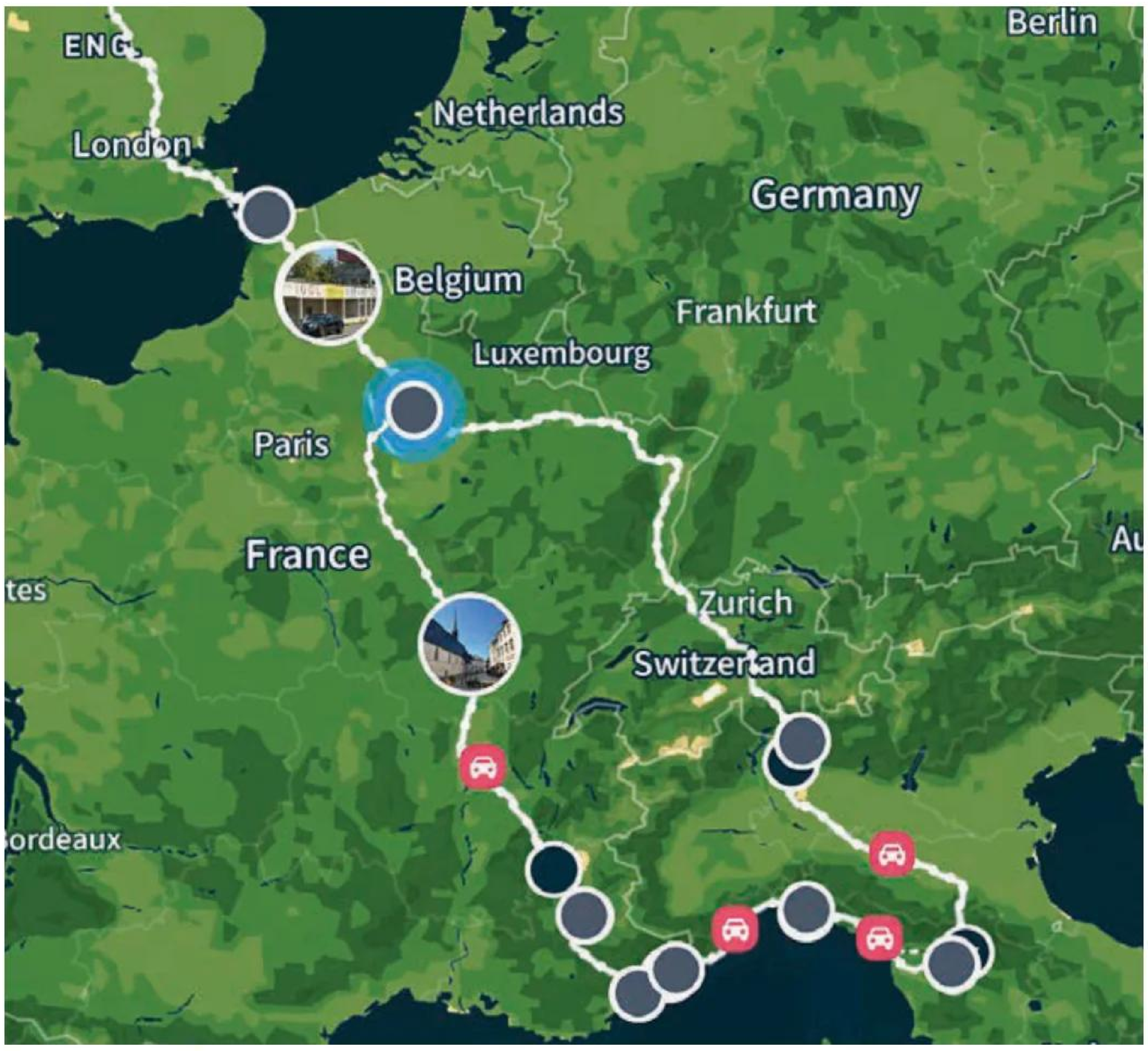
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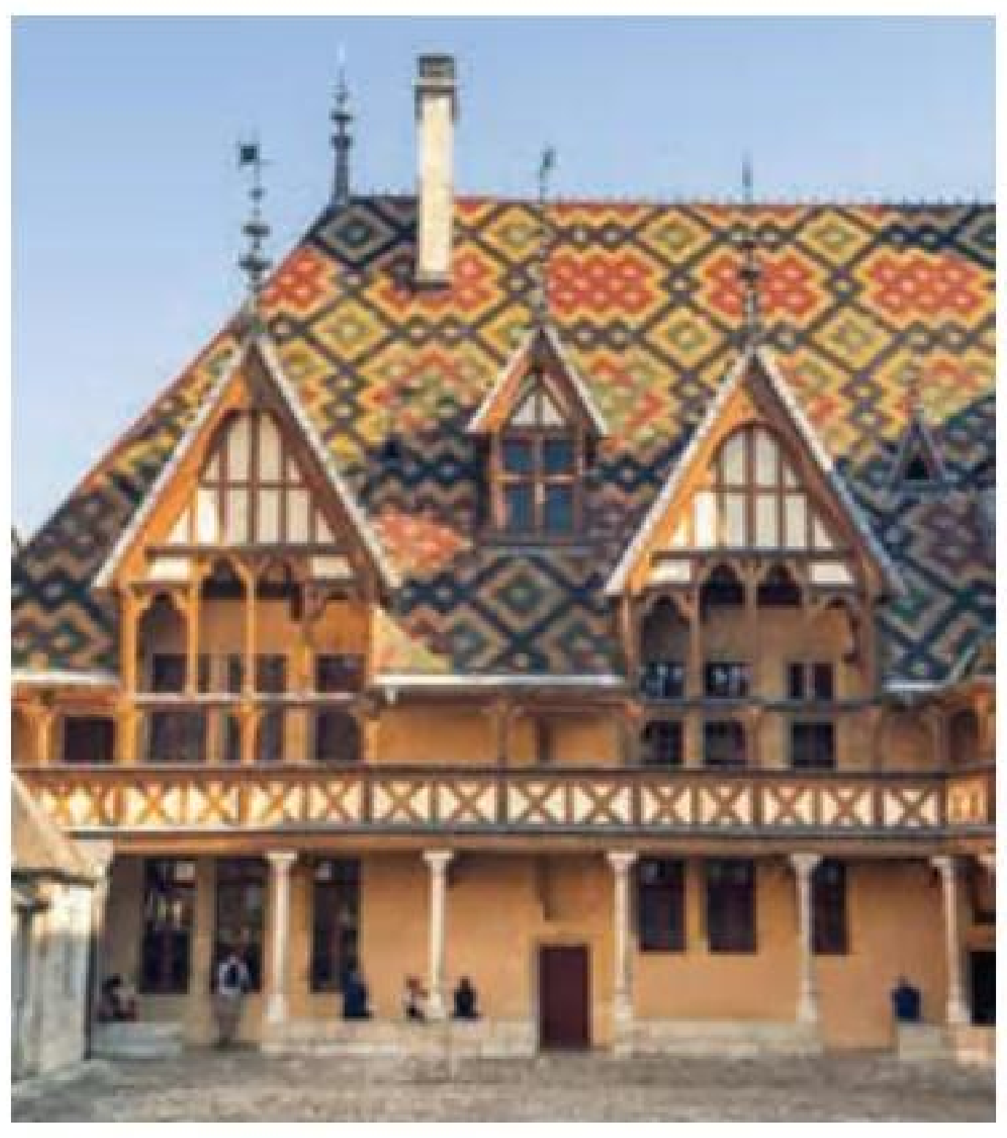

EUROPEAN VACATION

The 981 Boxster S is a brilliant sports car offering plenty of smiles to the mile, especially if treated to time navigating twisties in the Alps...

Words and photography **Chris Wallbank**

My first road trip to the south of France was way back in 2010 and included some of the best driving roads the country has to offer, not least the famous Route Napoleon. Something making the trip even more memorable was the fact that I did it in my very first Porsche, namely my 2006 987 Boxster 2.7, which was and still is one of best sports cars for the job of tackling the epic winding mountain passes of the Alpes de Haute Provence, whilst still proving excellent practicality for a longer road trip.

BACK IN 2010, MY TRIP LASTED JUST FIVE DAYS AND INCLUDED STOPOVERS IN PARIS, LYON, MONACO, ST TROPEZ AND THEN BACK TO MY HOME IN YORKSHIRE

To this day, I haven't driven any other roads matching the breathtaking views and thrilling switchbacks of Route Napoleon. Combine this with the unmistakable sound of the normally aspirated flat-six echoing around mountain walls (roof down, of course!) and you've got something very special indeed. It was an experience I will never forget. Fourteen years on, two generations of Boxster later and close to an extra 80bhp at my disposal, it seemed only right to revisit this legendary driving route in my current Boxster, a Basalt Black 981 S manufactured in 2012.

Back in 2010, my trip lasted just five days and included stopovers in Paris, Lyon, Monaco, St Tropez and then back to my home in Yorkshire, amounting to 2,200 miles, all of which felt a little rushed. This time, I had the luxury of twelve nights, allowing my partner, Rachael, and I to map out a more leisurely route, targeting Tuscany in Italy as our furthest destination.

We set about meticulously planning the journey, aiming to keep driving between stopovers at a maximum of five hours. After a couple of weeks glued to Google Maps, we finally came up with an itinerary. The journey took place in August and our adventure included staying in nine different towns and cities. The trip totalled 2,565 miles, with stopovers in Arras, Beaune, Seyne, Cannes, Menton, Portofino, Tuscany, Lake Como and Reims. Here's how it panned out.

HOME TO ARRAS: 354 MILES

Despite blue skies and twenty-eight-degree heat, I always knew the first day was going to consist of a tedious drive. Four and half hours was taken up by congested English motorways. We had the sole aim of getting to the Euro Tunnel and crossing into France as quickly and efficiently as we could. Credit where credit is due, the Boxster made this first part of the road trip effortless, not least thanks to the presence of cruise control. On some 50mph sections of motorway, the car was hitting an average of 41mpg, which is almost unbelievable for a sports car with a 3.4-litre engine. I reasoned I'd enjoy it while it lasted — I knew this kind of fuel economy would be absent as soon as I would be darting around mountains.

We were lucky enough to be joined by a lovely example of a French-registered 997 Carrera S for the crossing into France. Once we disembarked Le Shuttle, it was a short one-hour drive on the A26 to our first overnight stay in the historic town of Arras, just in time for a spot of dinner in one of the site's beautiful central squares, overseen by arcaded Flemish baroque buildings. We stayed in Hotel De L'univers, a reasonably priced period hotel a short walk from the central squares. Importantly, secure parking was on offer.

ARRAS TO BEAUNE: 320 MILES

After a reasonably priced petit dejeuner in Arras' stunning Heroes Square, we were on the road at 10am. There wasn't a cloud in the sky. The first pitstop of the day was a further 110 miles down the A26 autoroute to the outskirts of Reims for the obligatory photo opportunity at the historic Circuit de Reims-Gueux. I didn't manage to visit this petrolhead

Facing page Chris and Rachael in holiday mode en route to the south of France via Reims

Above Mainland western Europe's super-smooth roads are a world away from the hideous surfaces presented to drivers in the UK

landmark on my 2010 trip, but this time, it was an absolute must. For those of you who don't know, Circuit de Reims-Gueux opened in 1926 and was a road race circuit serving as home to the French Grand Prix for several years before closing in 1976. Today, you can park up and take a walk around the historic grandstands and abandoned pit garages, which are maintained by a charitable trust reinstating period advertising graphics in keeping with what would have been on display back in the day. As you can imagine, being an automotive photographer, I was in my element — what was meant to be a five-minute stop turned into a half-hour photoshoot, in which time we were joined by two of Stuttgart's finest GT Porsches and a UK-registered 981 Cayman GTS.

Photos in the bag, it was back on the A26 for a three-hour journey through Champagne countryside and then the more scenic Burgundy, before arriving in the compact town of Beaune. We chose Beaune instead of the more obvious Lyon (an hour further south) because the former seemed to have to have bit more charm, evidenced by its picturesque, rampart-ringed old centre. Beaune is also home to plenty of cellars offering samples of locally produced wine. After a sampling said wines and trying the local beef bourguignon, we headed back to the Henry Beaune hotel, which we can highly recommend. It's reasonably priced and one of the only central Beaune hotels offering much welcome secure underground parking.

AS THE SUN SET, AND WITH THE ROOF DOWN, WE PASSED LAC DE SERRE PONTON ON THE D3 AND NAVIGATED THROUGH THE TWISTY GORGE DE LA BLANCHE

BEAUNE TO SEYNE: 255 MILES

This leg of the journey is where both the driving roads and scenery get turned up a notch or two. It's where we joined the first part of Route Napoleon (when heading south). We set off from Beaune at nine in the morning with the aim of arriving at the stunning blue waters of Lake Corps for lunch by one. First, we took the A6, followed by the A48, effectively bypassing Lyon. Once past the city, we headed toward Grenoble, where the tips of the French Alps become more prominent on the skyline. The beautiful scenery was made even more interesting by the presence of metallic bronze 981 Boxster S.

Once past Grenoble, a left turn onto the N85 marks the end of autoroutes for the next two days of driving and the start of the iconic Route Napoleon. This route, taken by Napoleon in 1815 on his return from Elba, now forms some of the best driving roads Europe has to offer, and has been used by countless motor journalists and manufacturers for putting sports cars to the test. The two-hundred-mile-long route carves its way through the Alpes de Haute Provence, passing through Corps, Gap and Castellane, to name a few.

In 2010, I completed the full route from Lyon to Cannes in a day, which in my opinion, is too much distance covered in too short timescale to fully appreciate what the Route Napoleon has

NOVELTIES

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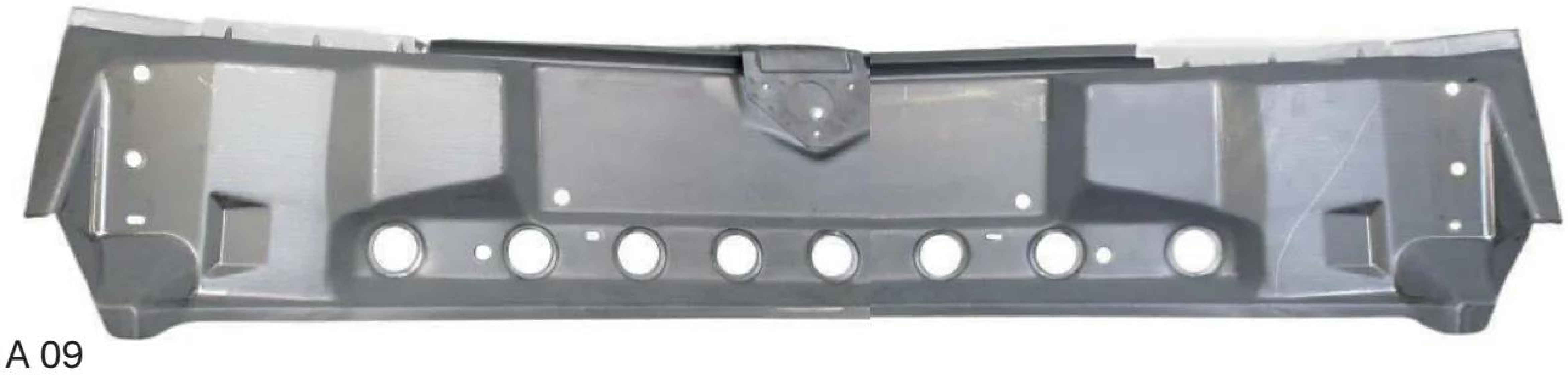

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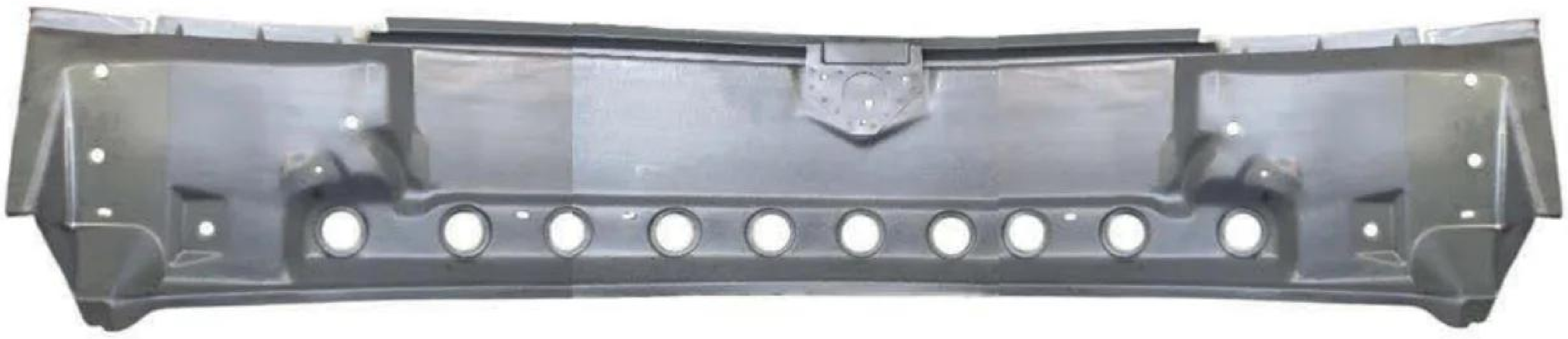

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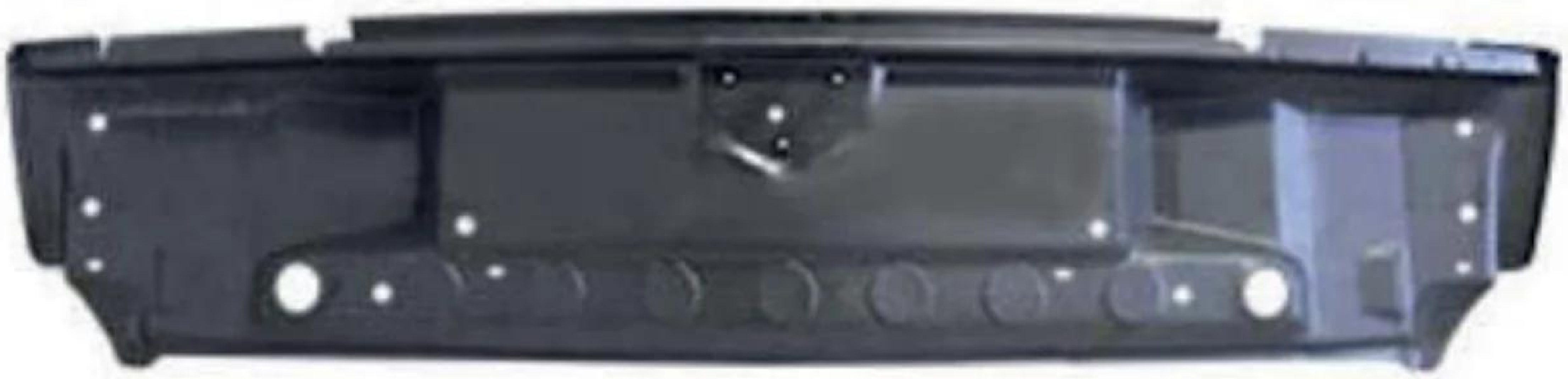

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Above Stevenage looked different from Chris's vantage point

to offer. This time, I decided to stretch the journey across two days, stopping roughly halfway in a little village named Seyne. On this first section of the N85, stopping at Corps for lunch by the lake at is an absolute must. Our chosen eatery, La Guingette, served amazing food with views of the crystal-clear lake surrounded by stunning mountain scenery.

After lunch, it was a ninety-minute drive to Seyne via the D14, N94, D3 and D900/C. This had to be one of my favourite sections of the whole trip — proper driving roads delivering pure exhilaration. The weather was perfect and the Boxster came into its own on the tight, twisty hairpins traversing up and down the mountains. Sport Chrono and the car's PDK semi-automatic gearbox proved they are worth their weight in gold, and barks from the exhaust on throttle blips when downshifting were amplified by the surrounding mountain faces. Bliss!

Fourteen years ago, I passed through what can only be described as a hole in the mountain on this section of the Route Napoleon. I couldn't help but think about the fact I'm still in a Boxster all these years later. I've owned 911s in between, but I find myself coming back to the Boxster time and again, which goes some way to demonstrating just how good these cars really are.

As the sun set, and with the 981's roof down, we passed Lac De Serre Ponton on the D3 and navigated through the twisty Gorge De La Blanche, characterised by huge drops to the right. I was left almost speechless. Does driving get any better than this? That evening, we chose to stop at Charda Spa, a newly opened guesthouse in Seyne, just off the D900. At eighty-five euros per room, and with a hot tub overlooking the Hautes De Alpes, you'd be daft not to.

FIRST THINGS FIRST, WE HAD TO DO A LAP OF THE F1 CIRCUIT, DROPPING A GEAR OR TWO IN THE FAMOUS TUNNEL RUNNING UNDER THE FAIRMONT HOTEL

SEYNE TO CANNES: 100 MILES

Day four was expected to be just as entertaining and exhilarating as the previous three on account of us covering the remaining hundred miles of Route Napoleon. It didn't disappoint. The weather was perfect, and I honestly don't think I stopped smiling for the whole duration of the first stint, which led us to Castellane, which is about half-way to Cannes, making it a good point to stop.

Castellane is dominated by the famous rock on which Notre-Dame du Roc chapel stands. The provençal old town is a maze of picturesque narrow lanes. We stopped for a quick refreshment in the square before tackling last fifty miles down to Cannes.

Rachael is a brilliant passenger. This is just as well, because the continuous change in altitude, as well as hairpin after hairpin, isn't for the faint-hearted, especially if the driver disables traction control and subjects you to the occasional dollop of oversteer. All under perfect control, of course. Ahem. In all seriousness, to this day, I still can't get over the perfect balance and exquisite chassis dynamics exhibited by the 981 platform, especially on these roads.

Before we knew it, the glistening Mediterranean Sea presented itself in the distance and we were starting our final descent to Cannes, where we were due a two-night stay to recharge our batteries. Unfortunately, we experienced non-stop thunderstorms during our visit, but at least we missed them on the journey down. Besides, inclement weather didn't stop us admiring the numerous supercars and unique Porsches on display outside the luxurious hotels and

Above The closer to Monaco you get, the more Porsches you start seeing

and designer shops. For those of you interested, I can certainly recommend Hotel Cristal as a reasonably priced hotel with on-site parking, just a stone's throw from the La Croisette beach strip. Room 607 had great views back to the hills of Cannes.

CANNES TO MENTON: 40 MILES

After some much needed R&R following the excitement of Route Napoleon and four days of heavy driving, it was time to ease ourselves into what would be the shortest stretch of the road trip: from Cannes to Menton via Monaco. For the next two days, we would be swapping views of snow-covered mountain tops for the glamour and sparkling blue waters of the French Riviera.

The quickest route from Cannes to Monaco is the A8 autoroute, but considering we were in no rush, we decided to take the more scenic M6098 coastal road, passing through Nice and smaller towns, including the beautiful Villefranche-sur-Mer and Eze. There are some stunning hidden beaches along the way, many bordered by great little stretches of coastline road ideal for letting rip with the Boxster's flat-six.

Two hours later, we were in Monaco, the most glamorous part of the Côte d'Azur. First things first, we had to do a lap of the F1 circuit, dropping a gear or two in the famous tunnel running under the Fairmont Hotel. Doing so is mandatory, right?! We then parked up, had a walk around the harbour, visited Casino Square and grabbed some lovely lunch in Cafe De Paris before heading to Menton, our fifth stopover.

Menton is little more than a ten-minute drive further along the coastline from Monaco. Not only is accommodation half the price of digs in Monaco, Menton is charming, punctuated by colourful buildings giving the place soul and character. After checking into Hotel Napoleon, we explored the hilly old town and sampled some of its signature fresh lemonade. We strolled along the beautiful bustling promenade. Menton quickly became one of our favourite stops of the trip. It's worth noting, parking here in August is virtually impossible if your space isn't pre-booked. I learned this the hard way.

MENTON TO PORTOFINO: 138 MILES

After a quick croissant, we hit the road at ten in the morning and, within just a few minutes, we were crossing the Italian border, heading to the famous town of Portofino. This three-and-a-half-hour journey took us along the main coastal SS1 autostrada, passing San

Above Is there a better sports car for a European road trip?

Remo amongst other picturesque Italian coastal towns. We didn't stop for lunch, though — we were keen to sample local seafood in Portofino.

We stayed in the neighbouring town of Santa Margherita Ligure, primarily because accommodation in Portofino seemed very hard to come by in peak summer. Even so, we opted to take the Boxster into town, rather than the tourist taxi boat, because we heard it can become quite crowded. Having the Porsche with us gave us the freedom of staying later, after most tourists had left. A walk up to the lighthouse viewpoint bar is a must for an aperitif and to watch the sun go down.

THE DRIVE AROUND LAKE COMO UP TO MENNAGGIO WAS EXCEPTIONALLY SCENIC, WITH THE LAKE SURROUNDED BY MOUNTAINS ON EITHER SIDE

PORTOFINO TO TUSCANY: 141 MILES

This day would see us reach the furthest point of our epic European road trip. In truth, this section of the journey was more about the destination than the driving, which mainly consisted of dull autostrada. We did, however, stop by the leaning tower of Pisa for a quick bite to eat and the obligatory tourist photo next to the tower.

Next stop, Borgo Divino, a stunning agriturismo estate located in the Chianti region. As we got closer, the rolling Tuscan landscape presented us with an abundance of vineyards, sunflowers, castellos and sweeping tree lined roads. This was the perfect setting for a three-night stay to unwind and immerse in local activities, such as truffle hunting and cooking classes. I can't recommend this place highly enough — the staff were very attentive. They were also keen to grab photos of the Boxster on the tree-lined entrance to the estate.

TUSCANY TO HOME: 1,121 MILES

The journey back home to Yorkshire was made up of just two overnight stays and was largely influenced by the most direct route home, which, fortunately, led us right through the enchanting Lake Como region, as well as Reims. We took the fastest route possible to Lake Como, passing Florence, Modena and Parma along the way, covering 248 miles and

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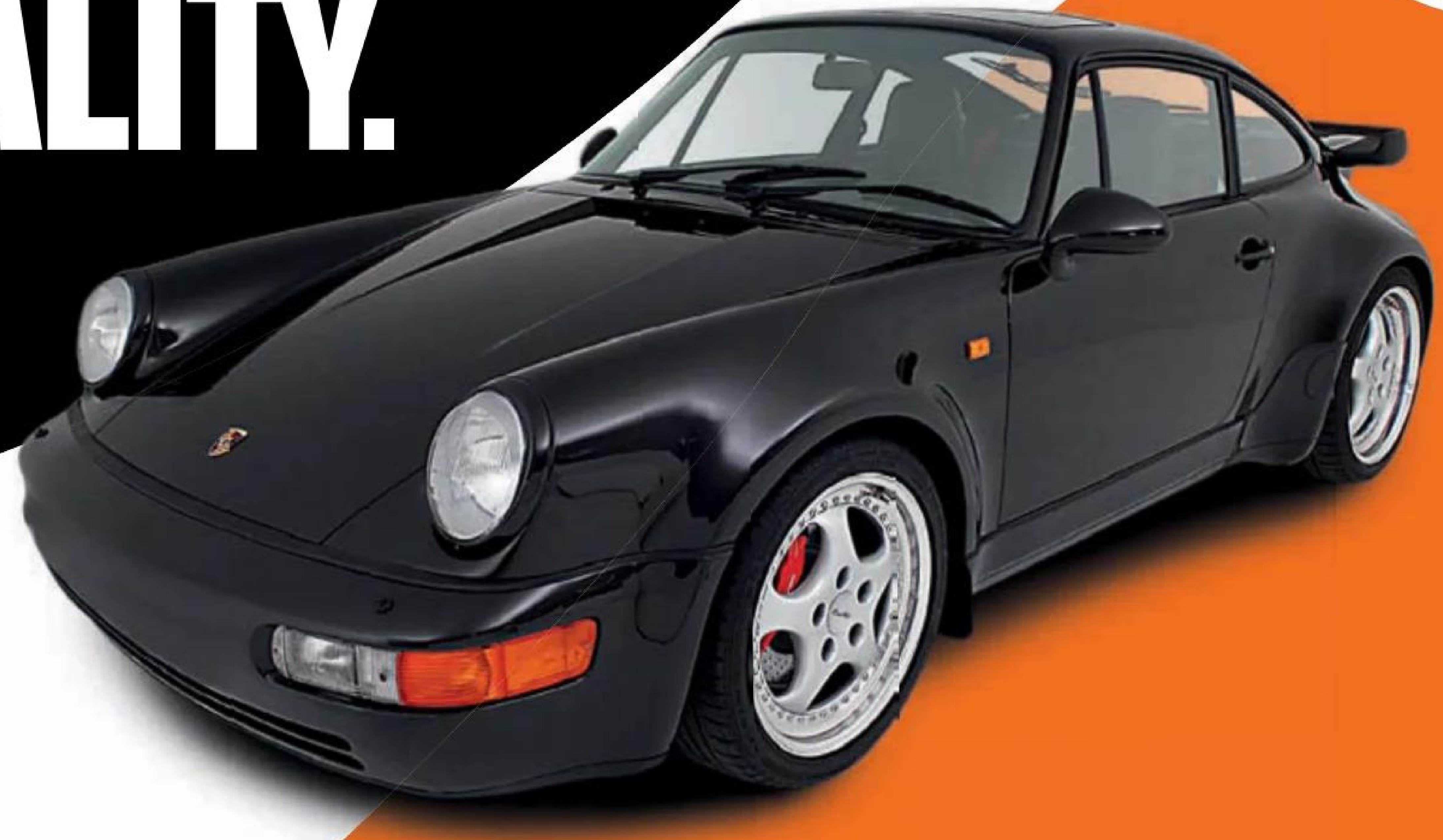

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Above Chris is on the hunt for a 981 Boxster GTS, meaning this Boxster S is now up for grabs

taking around four and a half hours.

The drive around Lake Como up to Mennaggio was exceptionally scenic, with the lake surrounded by mountains on either side. After exploring the lake and the famous Bellagio by boat, we stayed overnight in Mennagio at Hotel Du Lac, which offered stunning lakeside views and secure covered parking. The next morning, we headed to Reims for what would be the first of the two longest drives. Eight and a half hours, in fact. This was a mixture of mountain roads passing right through the middle of the stunning Swiss Alps on the A2, before a long stint on the A35 autoroute passing the French city of Basel.

Reims, the unofficial capital of the Champagne wine-growing region, seems a firm favourite as a road trip stopover, which makes sense considering it is one of the larger cities en route back to the UK. I calculated it is, in fact, exactly halfway between Lake Como and my home in Yorkshire.

We arrived at eight in the evening, just in time for dinner. This was our first time in Reims, which is why we took the opportunity to explore the city's many historical attractions before embarking on the Boxster's eight-hour journey back to Blighty and home. As you'd expect, these long drives were a little more tiring than what came before, but this was our trade-off against choosing to stay three nights in Tuscany. Still, the Boxster made easy work of it. Incidentally, we chose to take the ferry on the way back. Doing so was much cheaper than Le Shuttle and it broke up the last drive nicely.

So, then. Fourteen years after first exploring the south of France in a Porsche, my 981 Boxster S definitely rose to the occasion. I still think the Boxster is the best modern-day sports car money can buy, whether a base model 987 or something tastier. Moreover, a Boxster is definitely the best sports car you can buy for this kind of road trip. Put it this way, any more power than the 315bhp offered by the 981 S would be a waste on all those tight and twisty mountain passes, where the Boxster's sublime chassis dynamics (governed by the engine being mid-mounted) make themselves known.

Apologies to the 911 owners among you, but you even get two luggage compartments in a Boxster. This was a godsend, considering the amount of luggage Rachael brought along for the trip. I'm also impressed with the car's reliability. Perhaps I shouldn't be so surprised, but this Porsche is twelve years old and didn't miss a beat. Its fuel efficiency was equally impressive, averaging around 30mpg across the trip.

Would I have taken any other Porsche, given the choice? Yes, a 981 Boxster GTS. This model's standard Porsche Sport Exhaust (PSE) and Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM) would complete the Boxster package for me. In fact, I'm currently looking for a 981 GTS to replace my Boxster S. With this in mind, if you're interested in buying the car, please get in touch with me at *chris@chriswallbank.co.uk*. Perhaps this drop-top Porsche's next overseas adventure will be with *you* at the wheel? ●

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STATE OF HIBERNATION

Weather warnings, flash floods and a general absence of sunshine ushers in the winter, meaning it's time for Dan Sherwood's 996 GT3 to get its beauty sleep…

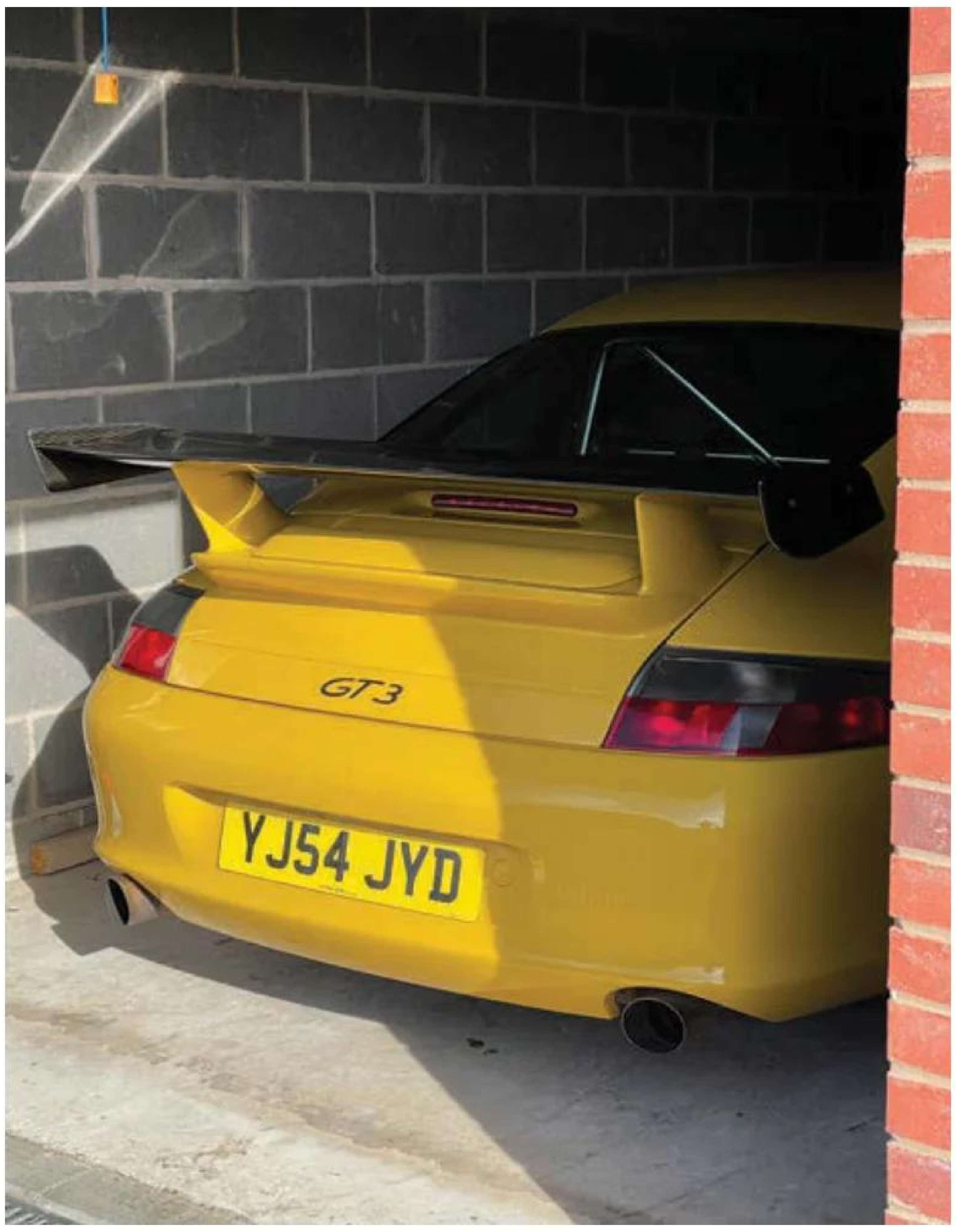
Above With poor weather closing in, Dan decided to retire his GT3 from the road until spring

New year's resolutions are a funny thing. The oft alcohol-addled promises we make to ourselves as we celebrate the start of a new year always promise such optimism. Whether it's getting that toned beach body, lowering your golf handicap or simply reducing time spent scrolling through social media, we convince ourselves resolutions are achievable and nothing will stand in the way of us attaining our newly set goals. As many of us all too often discover, however, seeing these lofty declarations through to fruition isn't always the cakewalk we hoped for or expected. For me, it was to try and use my 996 GT3 more. To get out to shows, meets and events. To get to grips with exploring what this revered racer for the road is really all about. As you can guess from my less than ebullient preamble, things didn't exactly go to plan.

A stressful house purchase was the first thing to put a spanner in the works, followed by a lack of good weather until the summer finally hit its stride, when a Mercedes Sprinter van decided it would rearrange the 996's freshly painted rear end. This meant the car spent even more time off the road. I grimaced as good weather swiftly slipped away. When the car was back with me after the necessary repair work, family commitments and professional obligations rose their heads. I fully expected the window of opportunity for enjoying time out in my GT3 had closed.

Resigning myself to rolling my road-going resolutions over to next year, I was surprised to find I was available to attend a show one weekend in September. Better still, weather forecasts predicted glorious sunshine. It was an opportunity I wasn't going to miss — I booked the GT3 a place at Porsche Club Great Britain's Porsche East event.

Considering the show was held on Rickinghall village green, near Diss in Norfolk, I wasn't expecting a huge turnout, but I was happily surprised not only at the quantity of Porsches in attendance, but also the quality of the



Above Twinning at Porsche Club Great Britain's Porsche East event in September

Right Now in a state of suspended animation until 2025

Stuttgart-crested metal on display. Being a GT3 owner, I found myself instructed to park alongside a host of GT Porsches, most notably a 997 GT3 finished in yellow. It was a cracking day out with a charmingly chilled atmosphere, enjoyed while I wandered the grassy venue and drank in the marvellous machines on display where the village football team usually plays.

As fun as the day was, it was the journey home that had my senses tingling, chiefly because I got to open up the car's 'Mezger' boxer and blast along backroads as part of a snake of Porsches of all generations, each car contributing to a sonorous flat-six harmony. And that was the last time the GT3 would be used in 2024 — the change in weather from sunshine to continuous showers has meant I've made the decision to park the car for the rest of the year with a view to doing better in 2025.

While many of you drive your Porsche in all seasons, it's not an option I want to entertain. Put simply, I'd rather keep my GT3 safely tucked away from rain, snow and road salt, as well as careless road users, until spring. As this decision has coincided with the need to renew my car insurance, I've moved the Porsche onto what's known as a 'laid-up' policy.

PUT SIMPLY, I'D RATHER KEEP MY GT3 SAFELY TUCKED AWAY FROM RAIN, SNOW AND ROAD SALT, AS WELL AS CARELESS ROAD USERS, UNTIL SPRING

Laid-up insurance — also known as SORN insurance — is a specialist policy specifically designed to cover cars stored away and kept off the road for an extended period of time. Whether it's a kit car being built, a dedicated track car, a car in need of repair or one you use seasonally, a laid-up policy will cover the vehicle when retired from the road. While there is no legal requirement to insure a vehicle when declared SORN and kept away from the public highway, it pays to be cautious, ensuring you don't risk being out of pocket in the event of fire or theft. When the vehicle is ready to return to the road, cover can be switched accordingly.

Many insurance companies already offer laid-up cover as an option for customers. It can result in substantial savings over a traditional road-use policy. If your insurance provider doesn't offer laid-up cover, then it's advisable to do the sums and check if you would be better off cancelling your existing policy and swapping to laid-up cover for the desired period. For my circumstances, it was a no-brainer. The 996 was to be garaged for the winter, and it was much more cost-effective to go for a laid-up policy for the next six months than it was to renew for another year of road use. Unfortunately, my previous insurer, Lockton Performance, doesn't currently offer laid-up policies, meaning I've switched cover to Adrian Flux.

I have been a long-time customer of the Norfolk-based broker and have used its laid-up cover on various project cars I've owned over the years. To cover the GT3 for six months on Adrian Flux's laid-up policy came to a total of £387.59. Whether I will keep the car off the road for that long remains to be seen, but if we should see an early flicker of spring sunshine, it only takes a phone call to change the policy and we'll be up and running again. Sleep tight, my pretty. ●

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DARK STAR

To Stuttgart. Not to the Porsche factory, but to TechArt for a catch-up and a drive of the tuning legend's take on the Taycan Turbo Sport Turismo. A best buy for 2025? If you want bespoke from your Porsche, this is where you come…

Words **Steve Bennett** Photography **Ade Brannan**

Ping! A new mission from Editor Furr. Obviously, always a pleasure and never a chore. What, where and when? "A Taycan Turbo," he says. "Flight to Stuttgart, all expenses paid, early October." Right, you are, boss. It's been a long time since I've been to the factory, and I didn't know that there was a new Taycan Turbo ready for launch. "That's because there isn't," he tells me. "Check the address." Ah, Leonberg.

If it's been a while since I've been to the factory, then it's been even longer since I've been to Leonberg, a picturesque satellite town a few miles west of Stuttgart. Its significance? Apart from the fact it loaned its name to a breed of dog? Leonberg is the home of the Porsche tuning powerhouse that is TechArt, a company transcending mere modifying. Think of Porsche's own Special Wishes department, but even more exclusive. Whatever the tuning trend, TechArt is usually leading it. Put it this way, of the half-dozen or so specialist tuners and tweakers orbiting the Stuttgart galaxy, TechArt's technicians are the undisputed masters of the universe.

A long time it may have been, but swinging into the unremarkable industrial estate from the confines of photographer Brannan's E34 Bimmer estate, the familiarity is suddenly overwhelming. For whatever reason, it always seems to be a dull day in Leonberg, but while the industrial estate might be less than glamorous, TechArt's glitzy headquarters is anything but, it's façade entirely in keeping with what occurs inside. Previous trips have been explosive and, usually, focused on TechArt's GTstreet machines. A vivid blue street fighter based on the 997 GT2 RS and chucking out 711bhp was particularly memorable. A few years later, a GTstreet R based on a 991 Turbo and dressed in vivid green excited us with its output of 720bhp. More recently, we sampled a GTstreet R based on a 992 Turbo S. Our test drive took place at long-time TechArt partner and independent Porsche specialist, Tech 9, based in Hale, Liverpool.

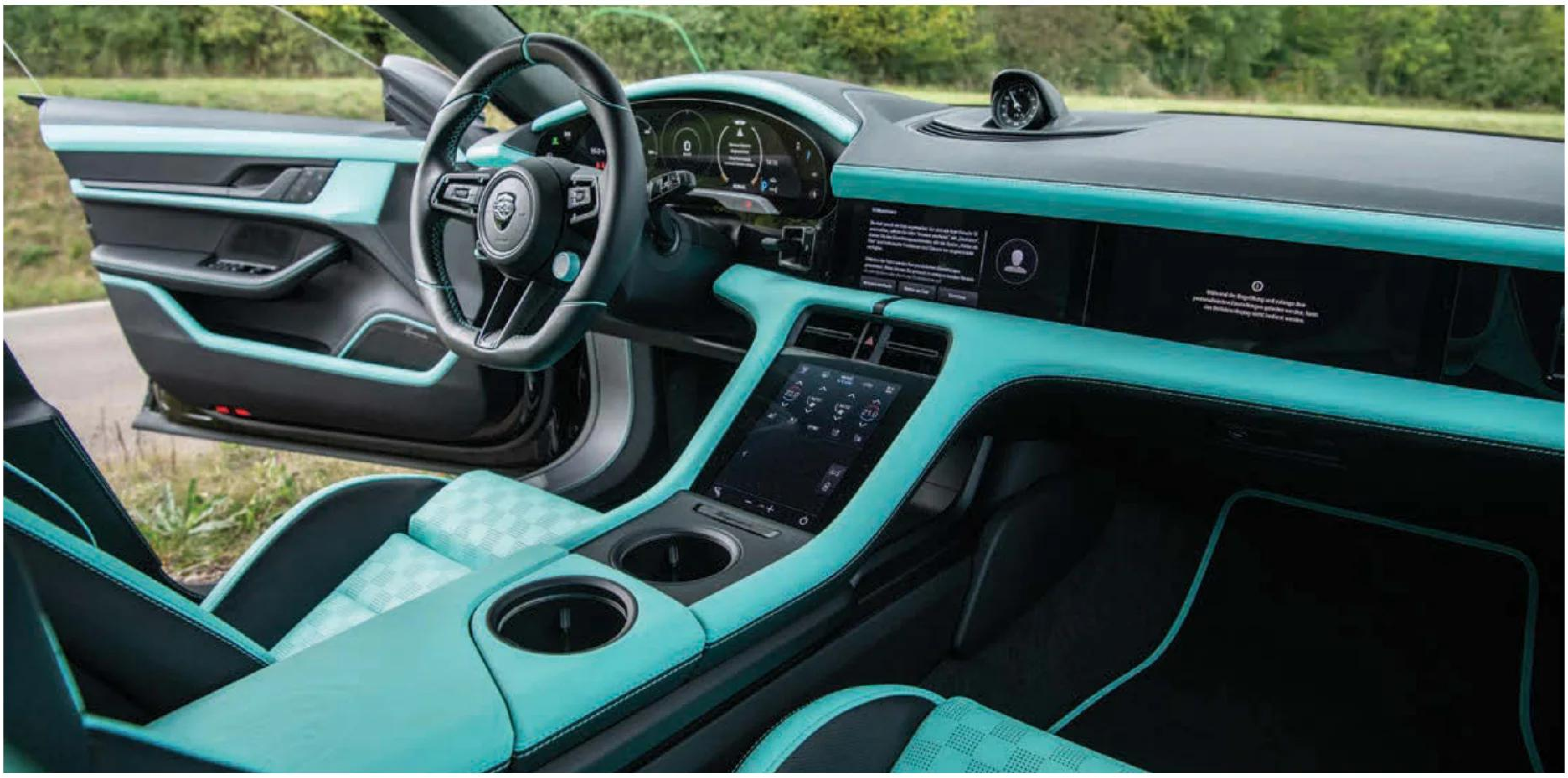
Turn back time and you'll note, since this magazine's launch in 1990, we've been featuring TechArt's output. Indeed, such was our enthusiasm for Germany's leading Porsche tuners (TechArt, Gemballa, Strosek and the like), rarely an issue went by without at least one of them being featured. Often, all were showcased at the same time. *911 & Custom Porsche World* might have been a more apt title — this magazine's founding father, Clive Househam, launched *Street Machine*, after all.

Our earliest TechArt encounter was a trip to Leonberg in 1992, when we drove a pair of wide-bodied 964 Cabriolets. One was finished in Speed Yellow with a matching hood. Oh, and a matching interior. And wheels. The passage of time isn't always kind to fashion and trends. This includes modifying Porsches. That said, what goes around comes around, and perhaps with a tongue-in-cheek attitude and, maybe, a shell suit, you'd rock any cars and coffee meet in such a blinged up Porsche today.

The TechArt story begins even earlier than our own. Back in 1987, to be precise, when the 'Art' in TechArt was the artisan craft of bespoke leather interiors for premium marque sports cars, a niche that soon became Porsche-only. Cast your mind back to those halcyon days and you'll recall this was the dawning of the age of the bodykit. TechArt was perfectly placed, launching a custom kit for the 928. Subtle it wasn't, but in a market including styling products from Koenig, subtle wasn't really a strategy.

TechArt signalled its intent as to how it wanted to be perceived, that of being a high-end manufacturer building completely new TechArt cars (recognised as such under German TUV law), despite them being based on Porsches. No model went untouched by TechArt's team, but it was the 993

Facing page TechArt has delivered what Bennett describes as the Darth Vader of the Porsche world



Above Any finish is available to order through TechArt's personalisation service, which is even more exclusive than Porsche's Special Wishes programme

CT3 that really established the by now Leonberg-based outfit. The CT3 wore a distinctive aero kit and was powered by a supercharged flat-six. There were interior upgrades, but the headline was 462bhp, a solid number back then.

Of course, Porsche was still very much a niche player in the sports car market, a fact restricting TechArt's audience. Things would change when Porsche went mainstream, with first the Boxster and then the 996-generation 911, which generated the first Turbo-based GTstreet and subsequent GTstreet S, the latter based on the GT2.

FIT AND FINISH OF THE CARBON-FIBRE COMPONENTS IS STUNNING, WHETHER PAINTED, IN BARE FINISH OR LACQUERED

Again, we were there to sample the goods and to witness TechArt's genuine progress in the field of aerodynamics. This was no 'style over substance' exercise. The wings, the splitters, the scoops, they were the product of intense development and wind tunnel testing. Every subsequent GTstreet model has carried on the concept, establishing TechArt as a serious player in a country taking this sort of stuff very seriously indeed. Witness the annual Tuner Grand Prix, held annually at Hockenheim. TechArt's 997 GTstreet RS wiped the floor with the not insubstantial competition in 2008. And yes, we drove that one, too.

If today's electro Taycan Turbo test drive is a sign of the times, then Porsche's decision to go big with the Cayenne back in 2003 was arguably even more seismic. For TechArt, it created a market burning bright for many years. TechArt-tuned Cayennes were certainly aggressively styled and just what the otherwise plain Cayenne needed. Power from modified twin-turbocharged V8s was easy to come by, too. And while the Cayenne still forms an important part of the TechArt range, and though the 911 remains at the pinnacle, the company is clearly correct to be looking at a post-ICE future, which is why we're visiting.

I confess, I'm looking forward to getting behind the wheel of the TechArt Taycan Turbo Sport Turismo, but in view of the fact that I haven't been to the company's Leonberg base of operations for a good few years, a guided tour and chat is in order with Communications Director, Marcus Fischer. Interestingly, just as we are about to start, a stripped-out 992 Turbo arrives for its GTstreet transformation. There really isn't much left. The centre tub remains, but the entire front and rear ends are stripped and removed ready to receive bespoke TechArt body panels. Likewise, the interior. Stylistically, some of what TechArt does is not really my cup of tea, but then again, each build is bespoke and tailored to the customer, who can choose from TechArt's extensive options or go completely their own way. No two builds are the same, but they are all of identical quality, which is where I can really buy into the TechArt way of doing things. The ultimate compliment here is 'factory', and that's what TechArt has been achieving for many years, both in-house and from its suppliers. As befitting of a small manufacturer in its own right, TechArt has separate departments for all aspects of production, whether engineering for chassis development, wheels, exhausts, body styling, aerodynamics, engine tuning, parts production or testing. And all work is held to account by a strict TUV testing regime.

Fit and finish of the carbon-fibre components is stunning, whether painted, in bare finish or lacquered. Despite the material being around for many years, manufacturing parts from carbon-fibre is not an easy process, particularly when it needs to be on proud display, such as a body panel. TechArt produces panels and components in-house and works with trusted suppliers, who can meet its exacting requirements.

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Above Sport Turismo already looked great, but is further enhanced through TechArt's bespoke body panels

In terms of build and quality, park a GTstreet next to a current factory GT3 RS and you wouldn't be able to distinguish between the two. Oh, and incidentally, who's aero-copying who these days? When it comes to aero appendages, I'd say Porsche is out-TechArting TechArt.

According to Marcus, it took a while to get business back up and running at full capacity post-COVID, and some supplier connections have now been severed due to the war in Ukraine. As a nod to how TechArt started out, he's keen to show us around what is still known as 'The Saddlery', because while body and mechanical modifications are important, "interiors are crucial for our customers." And so it proves. Swathes of leather in all colours hang from the ceiling, alongside templates for interior panels. There is no limit to what can be achieved or curated in the interior of a Porsche. You want it, you can pretty much have it, the only constraints being financial.

Of course, it helps that Porsche interiors are of an inherent quality to start with. Few customers would choose to rip out their car's standard seats, complete with their electric adjustment and heating elements, but a different colour or mix of leather, or even one of TechArt's textured or patterned finishes, well, this is another matter. Likewise dash tops, door fittings, centre armrests and consoles. TechArt will even take steering wheels and increase the diameter of the rim for what Marcus describes as "a more powerful feel". It's not just leather on offer. Carbon or painted trim features, too. As do combinations of all three. To be honest, it's quite mind boggling, the only limitation seemingly your imagination. And bank balance.

I find myself wondering what I would choose, although it's fair to say it wouldn't be, er, mint green. Or is it turquoise? I'm not sure, but Marcus is happy to describe the interior of the Taycan Turbo Sport Turismo we're here to drive as being "like a disco, like a nightclub," and I wouldn't disagree. But while one man's interior might be disco in ambience, the standard of the trimming and the quality of the leather is on another level, even compared to a factory finish. And there are swathes of it, from the dash top to the sills, all of it with contrasting stitching. The seats have a perforated check finish and, as promised, the steering wheel is powerfully chunky. There are added touches of colour with turquoise detailing on the rotary Drive Mode control on the steering wheel, plus similar for the Allen bolt fixings.

THINGS HAVE CERTAINLY MOVED ON A BIT, WITH THE ARRIVAL OF THE SECOND-GENERATION MODEL AND A RECENT FACELIFT

Exterior-wise, TechArt has taken the front and rear aprons and given them the aero treatment. The effect in black is pleasingly subtle, the front sporting an extended TechArt-embossed carbon splitter, which extends purposefully and features supporting struts either side of the number plate. Exposed carbon-fibre straked intakes below the LED headlights direct air to the Taycan's massive front discs. If painted a different colour, the carbon splitter and intakes would add a contrasting level of enhancing detail. The

twenty-one-inch wheels (twenty-twos are available) are TechArt's Formula VI design wrapped in Goodyear Eagle F1 rubber. Massive eight-pot brake callipers are detailed to match the interior theme. Likewise, the pinstriping on the sills.

There's more aero fore and aft of the front wheels. It takes the shape of carbon winglets, which at the rear, blend into a downforce-inspired diffuser. TechArt 3D badging replaces Porsche script. Take a step back, and overall, this Taycan is Darth Vader-esque, particularly from the front.

What about the power? I mean, it's going to be epic isn't it? Even more epic than the standard Taycan Turbo's 872bhp, from its twin motor and 97kWh battery set-up? Well, no, actually. Extracting more might be feasible moving forward, but the risks to the battery are unknown and then there is TUV type approval to be considered. It is, for now, a path that TechArt is reluctant to pursue. "The market for electric cars," says Marcus "is individualism. Our customers have a very clear vision of what they want. The desire for more power from an electric motor isn't like that for, say, a turbocharged flat-six, where it can be felt and heard. An electric motor is more 'on and off'. The power is there immediately." And of course, he is right. This is the defining feel of the electro powerplant.

It's been some four years since I last drove a Taycan. Things have certainly moved on a bit, with the arrival of the second-generation model and a recent facelift. I was something of a convert after that early encounter, but I've never truly put an electric car to the test — Taycan or otherwise — from a day-to-day point of view. My Taycan weekend was largely spent joy riding and impressing passengers with the car's 'shock and awe' acceleration.

Piloting TechArt's 'Darkstar' isn't going to be much different then, but hey, I'm still going to be educated. The revised Taycan platform packs a whole load of sophisticated chassis technology. Air suspension is fitted as standard, plus a torque vectoring rear differential and new Porsche Active Ride (PAR) suspension, which uses electrohydraulic pumps to control the support from each damper, with the ability to counteract

Right Tiffany-coloured calipers look fantastic behind TechArt's own gloss black Formula wheels

Above Just about the ultimate blend of performance and practicality you'll get from a Porsche

acceleration, braking and cornering forces to keep the body level. It's very impressive on a car weighing 2,250kg.

What immediately impresses about the Taycan is just how 'Porsche' it feels. The low seating position, the controls that are in exactly the same place from model to model. Start-up is the press of a button and a futuristic whirr as electrons pulse through the car. A toggle on the dash activates forward and reverse and that's it, we're off out of TechArt's industrial estate gloom and to some familiar fast roads on the edge of Leonberg.

The interior is a truly very pleasant place to be. It feels special. Contact points matter and every surface is a tactile delight, including the chunky steering wheel, which is good because it acts as a point of contact for the whole driving experience, as does the low-slung seat. Goodness, this thing is quite hard to get your head around on so many levels, but overall, what impresses is the incredible body control and the low centre of gravity from the twin motors and the batteries. Yes, there is mass, but it sits low, which helps immensely with the Taycan's ability to change direction. The same is true of PAR's ability to support each corner. You know there's a lot going on under the surface, but rather like the age-old swan analogy, above the surface, everything is calm, serene and under control.

There are different suspension modes, including Sport if you want it, but as ever with Porsche systems, the preferred setting is for comfort and the suspension will firm up of its own accord, certainly when a bit more driver commitment is registered. Drive even a 'basic' Taycan like you stole it, and it's hard to believe there are even quicker models available. The Turbo will hit 60mph in 2.7 seconds, while the Turbo S and GT will complete the same task in 2.4 seconds and 2.2 seconds respectively. I'm not quite sure how you would tell the difference, given the Turbo's performance when provoked is borderline unusable/insane. Apparently, there is a Formula E style 'push-to-pass' function, which unlocks even more power for ten second bursts. Whatever, TechArt's pragmatic decision not to explore power extraction is perfectly justified.

All that 'time travel' performance is fun in a gimmicky sort of way, but perhaps the best way to drive the Taycan is just, er, normally. It's serene, comfortable and relaxing. Press on a bit, and its satisfying to use the power in bursts and load up the grip and lean on the chassis. Going mad with the power is just unsustainable because it is almost impossible for the driver to keep up. Go with the electron flow, this is the best way.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE ULTIMATE IN PERSONALISED PORSCHE AND YOUR POCKETS ARE DEEP ENOUGH, IT'S A NO-BRAINER

Ultimately, though, whether Taycan, GTstreet or Cayenne, performance is a given. These are Porsches, after all. The appeal is more about enjoying a car you have configured to your own personal specification, which TechArt will take and turn into crafted reality, as the firm has been doing for nearly forty years.

One of 2025's best buys? If you're looking for the ultimate in personalised Porsche and your pockets are deep enough, it's a no-brainer. Get in touch with the TechArt team today. ●

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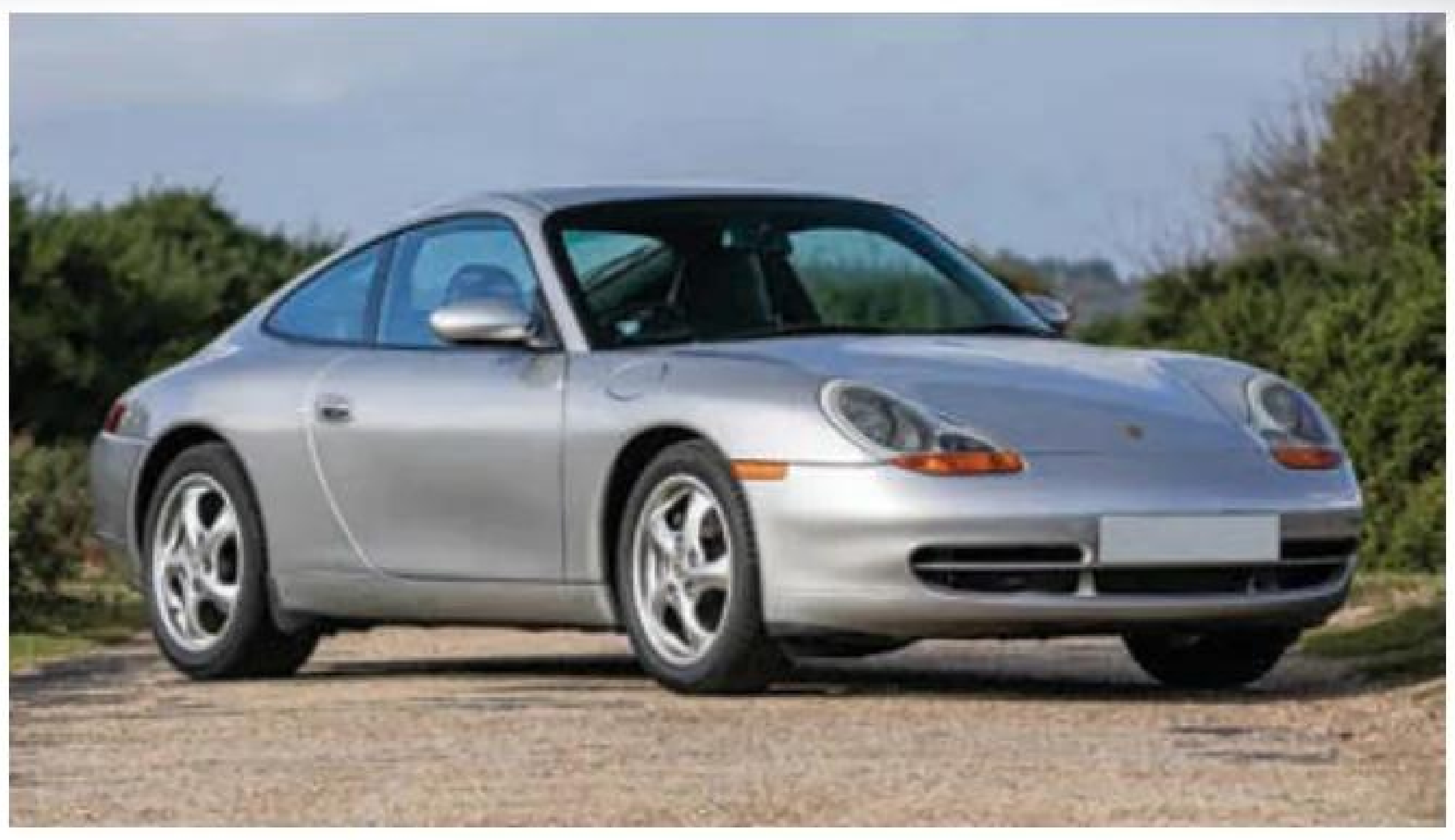
AUCTION NEWS

Sharing the spotlight with this month's auction stars is one of our very own fleet cars, namely the 981 Boxster S owned by *911 & Porsche World* photographer, Chris Wallbank...



Before we get to the beautiful black Boxster you'll have read about in this very magazine (and many of our 'fleet' updates in recent months), let's take a look at the party of Porsches lined up at the recent NEC Classic Motor Show by Iconic Auctioneers. Leading the charge was one of just thirteen 991 Club Coupes. Moreover, this particular example is one of only two in right-hand drive and the only Club Coupe designated for the UK market (the sister car went to Hong Kong). Finished in Porsche Family Green and not previously offered, this sleek 911 was presented with a lower estimate of £185,000.

In fact, one could argue the Club Coupe is even rarer than we've suggested — one of the thirteen was kept back for the Porsche Museum in Zuffenhausen, meaning only twelve such 911s are in the public domain. To make the ordering process for the dynamic dozen a little fairer, Porsche ran a lottery system, which opened in 2012. Each of the successful buyers had their name engraved on the switch panel trim strip and were handed the keys to their new 911 by none other than Wolfgang Porsche at a celebratory dinner in Stuttgart. Additionally, the Museum printed a limited run of 250 books documenting the build process, a copy of which accompanies each car.

Having someone else's name tattooed on a prospective Porsche purchase didn't seem to bother bidders when Iconic Auctioneers presented the lean, green Club Coupe machine at the NEC, so much so bidding exceed the lower estimate, resulting in final sale price of £186,750.

Similarly limited edition (as suggested by its two-letter model designation), the UK-only 911 Turbo (930) LE offered at the same sale generated a bidding war, resulting in a winning bid of £208,125. Launched to mark the end of the classic 911 Turbo's time on production lines in 1989, little more than fifty LEs were manufactured, one for each of the Porsche Centres established in the UK at the time of assembly. Already exclusive, the car offered by Iconic Auctioneers was made even more desirable by the addition of Paint to Sample Gletscherblau Metallic and has covered less than twenty thousand miles from new. No doubt about it, a collector-grade 911.

Not at all exclusive, but by no means a car to ignore, the manual 1998 Arctic Silver 996 Carrera offered at the NEC caught our attention. Pitched without reserve and subject to fastidious maintenance at various Porsche Centres, this silver stunner — complete with increasingly in vogue 'fried egg' headlights — shifted for a bargain £12,938. Elsewhere in the same sale, a 1982 Guards Red 911 SC Targa with front-end Flachbau conversion sold for £50,625, a same-colour 1989 Carrera 3.2 Cabriolet sold for £55,800, a 1986 Grand Prix White 944 Turbo sold for £24,200, and a 2000 996 Carrera 4 Cabriolet finished in Beige, offered with just 16,300 miles on the clock and, somewhat bizarrely, advertised as "the property of a gentleman" sold for £20,813.

REPRESENTING THE TOP TIER OF PORSCHE'S TRANSAXLE FAMILY OF PRODUCTS, THE 1981 GUARDS RED 924 CARRERA GT SOLD FOR £56,250

Representing the top tier of Porsche's transaxle family of products, the NEC auction's 1981 Guards Red 924 Carrera GT sold for a reasonable £56,250, which represents something of a bargain when compared to the same-age, same-colour 911 Turbo (930) selling for £168,750 at the event. That's more than the neighbouring lot's 2022 Gentian Blue 992 GT3 Touring, which changed hands for £157,500.

A look at what's ahead teases with the Historics Auctioneers Brooklands Velocity sale, to be held at Mercedes-Benz World

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on 23rd November. A 1975 914 IMSA GT evocation with genuine RSR parts used in the engine remanufacturing process excites with a lower estimate of forty grand, while a totally standard 1.8-litre 914 with just 43,282 miles covered from new promises to please its new owner, not least because the car is offered without reserve. The 1980 Guards Red 924 Turbo featured in our recent, er, 924 Turbo buying guide stars in the same auction. Restored by Porsche Centre Bournemouth as part of the UK's Porsche Classic Restoration Challenge competition and remaining in the Centre's possession until 2021, this radiant red Turbo carries a lower estimate of £25,000.

Not a fan of 924s? How about a 2004 Seal Grey 996 Carrera 4S? With a lower estimate of £17,000, this all-pawed Porsche represents arguably the very best value for money of the water-cooled 911 era. We said as much earlier in this magazine.

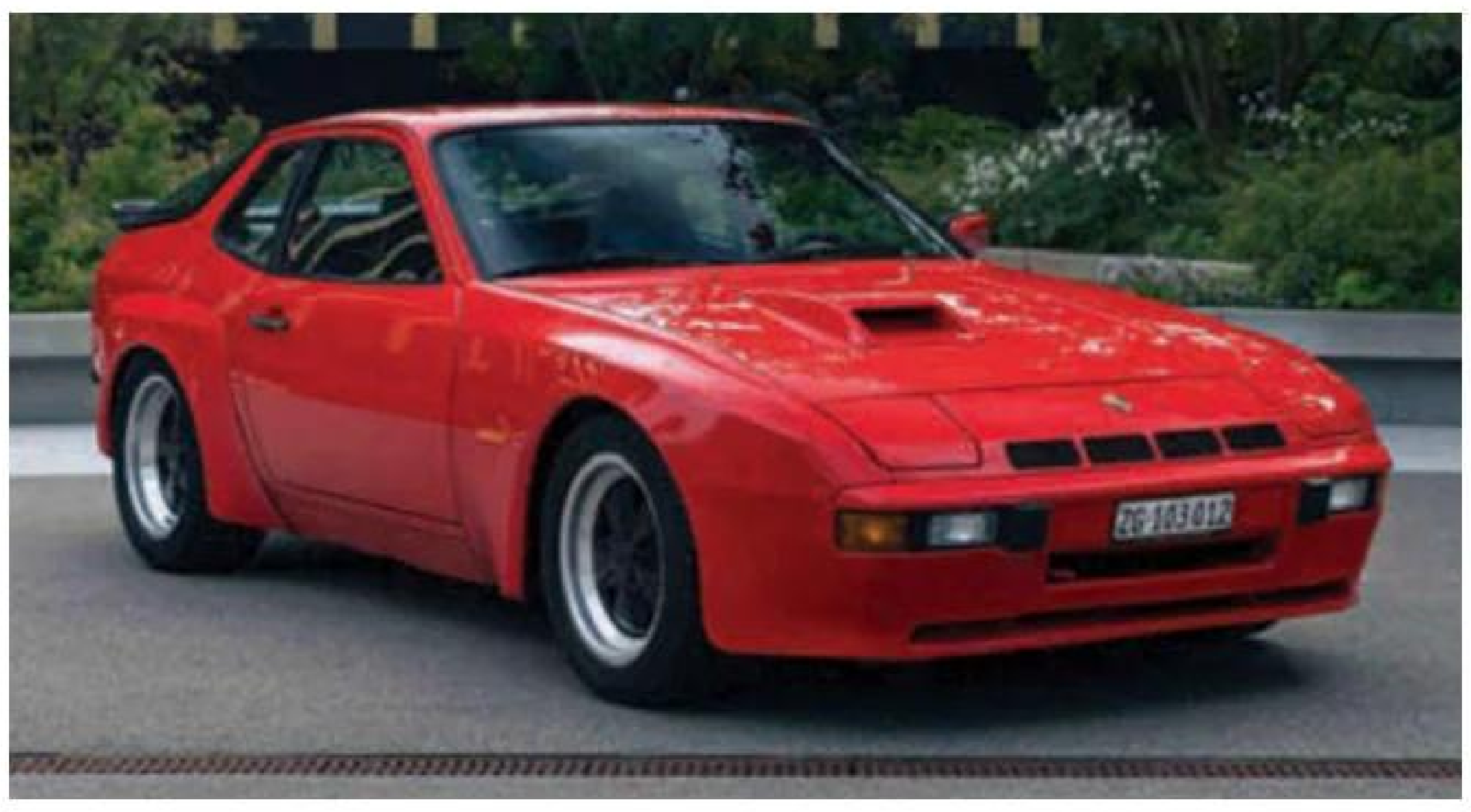
A mention for the one-off 911 Turbo 'Remastered' produced by the Porsche Special Wishes department in celebration of the 911 Turbo's fiftieth anniversary earlier this year. Based on a 992 Turbo, but mirroring the styling of the very first 911 Turbo (gifted to Louise Piëch, daughter of Ferdinand Porsche, on the occasion of her seventieth birthday in 1974), this unique 911 presents an unmissable opportunity to become the first owner of a one-off special-edition Porsche. Showing delivery use only (the odometer displays just thirty-five kilometres), the car is being offered via online auction by RM Sotheby's in the USA. The lower and upper estimates are $330,000 and $430,000 respectively.

To the aforementioned 981 Boxster S, then. Owned by *911 & Porsche World* photographer, Chris Wallbank, this immaculate three-owner drop-top has covered just 29,400 miles from new and comes with full Porsche Centre and independent marque specialist service history. The original purchaser specified an impressive £12,295 of individual equipment, including Sport Chrono, PDK transmission, Park Assist front and rear, Basalt Black paintwork, Porsche Communication Management (PCM) with mobile phone preparation and Bluetooth connectivity, partial extended leather, heated front seats, wind deflector, cruise control, twenty-inch Carrera Classic wheels and automatically dimming mirrors with rain sensor, among other add-ons. Chris has added a GTS rear diffuser, coloured wheel centre caps, a new set of Michelin Pilot Sport 4 tyres, and commissioned a PDK service and air-conditioning radiator replacement at RPM Specialist Cars earlier this year. Three-stage paint correction with ceramic coating, resprayed bumpers and restored side skirts contribute to a flawless finish. Interested? Email Chris at *chris@chriswallbank.co.uk*. He's asking for £31,995.

How about a 987 Cayman R, essentially the blueprint for the GT4 line-up? Offered by Porsche Club Motorsport bod, Chris Pruden, this stunning 'baby 911' has covered forty-two thousand miles from new, features a manual gearbox, BOSE audio equipment, Sport Chrono, carbon-fibre bucket seats, extensive service history and an air of exclusivity as a consequence of the Cayman R's limited-volume production. A terrific example of a much vaunted modern classic, this bright white R is yours for £44,500. Get in touch with Chris directly at *pru@porscheclubgb.com*.

The final Porsche tickling our fancy this month is the jaw-dropping, Flachbau-styled 997 featured on the cover of the August 2018 issue of *911 & Porsche World*. Currently in the custody of independent sales specialist, Border Reivers, and offered at £79,995, this Rothmans-liveried homage to Porsche's Group C 956 endurance racers was developed by Reflex Auto Design, a company with its roots stretching back to the 1940s and a strong heritage of high-end Rolls-Royce and Aston Martin restorations. Today, the company is a leading light in the UK aftermarket scene, providing Liberty Walk and Pandem kits, stunning paint options, Revo tuning and much more besides. This unique 997 acts as a showcase of the firm's skills. An eye-popping Porsche by any measure, the car is available for viewing at Border Reivers. Visit *borderreivers.co* or call 07591 112581. ●

THIS ROTHMANS-LIVERIED HOMAGE TO PORSCHE'S GROUP C 956 ENDURANCE RACERS WAS DEVELOPED BY REFLEX AUTO DESIGN



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DEALER SPOTLIGHT

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Continuing our series looking at the cars currently available in specialist dealerships, we head to Slough and visit Porsche sales centre, RSJ...

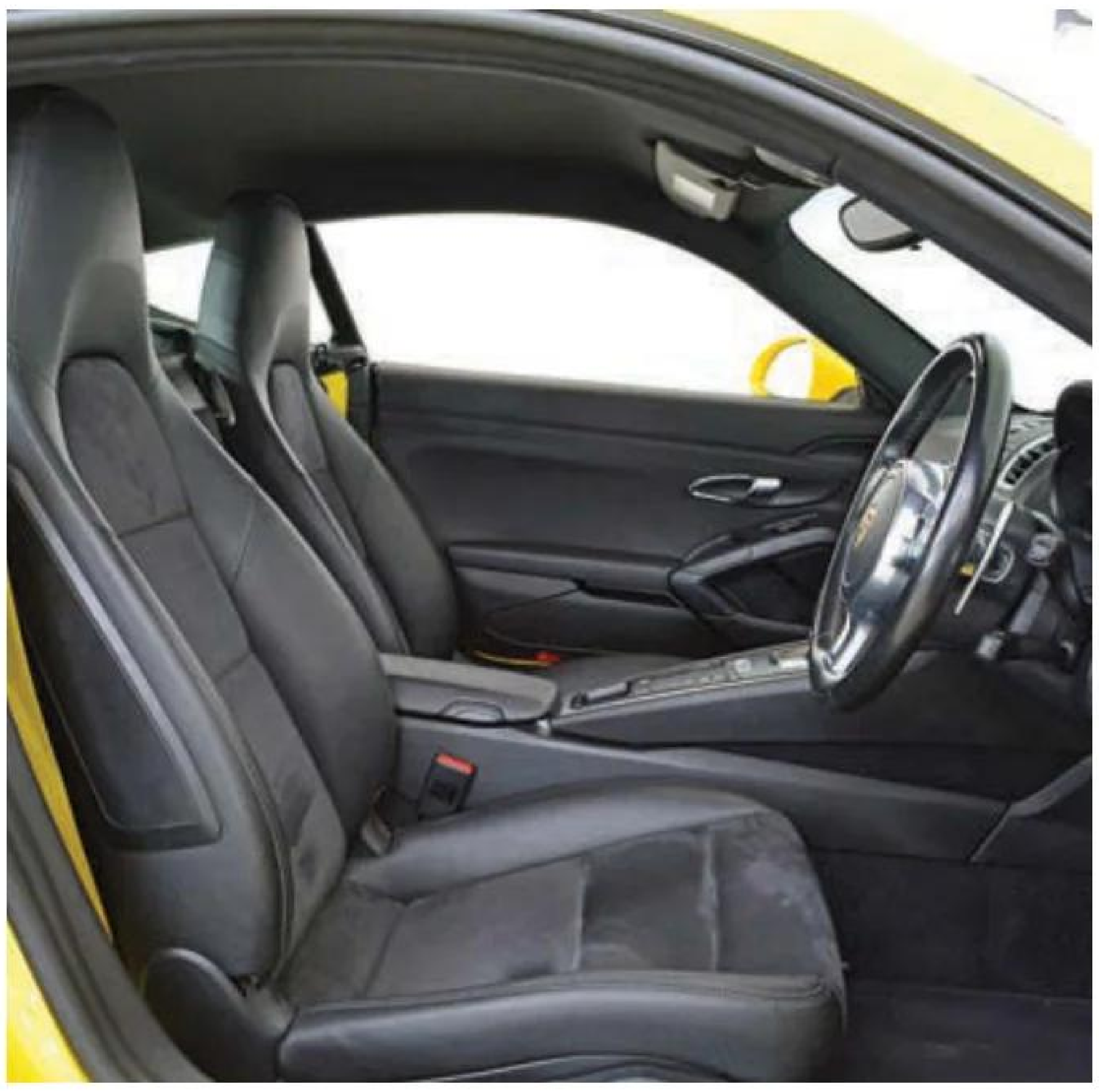
Words **Robert Smith** Photography **RSJ**

RSJ has traded in Porsches since 1997. Based in Slough, Berkshire, the company has a strict buying policy of only acquiring cars free of accident history and with industry accepted tolerances. Put simply, RSJ's aim is to sell the best-prepared and best-presented cars in the used Porsche market. To this end, all necessary service work is carried out on a car prior to it be being offered in the RSJ showroom, giving peace of mind to buyers, allowing them to enjoy maintenance-free motoring from the moment they hop into their new joy toy.

The RSJ offering is primarily focused on water-cooled series production Porsches, spanning the 996-generation 911 through to close of 991 production, but also encompassing same-age Boxsters, Caymans, Macans and Cayennes. To this end, the company is always on the lookout for high-quality cars to reintroduce to the Porsche marketplace. Give the team a shout if you're looking to part with your P-car.

We took a look around the RSJ showroom and counted twenty-two currently available cars ranging in price from £23,000 to £70,000. At the lower end of this price spectrum resides a 2011 987 Boxster S loaded with seven-speed PDK transmission, heated Sport seats, Sport Chrono, rear parking sensors, nineteen-inch wheels and with only fifty-eight thousand miles on the clock. At the top of the tree is a second-generation 997 Turbo S with forty-seven thousand miles covered from new. Featuring Porsche Ceramic Composite Brakes (PCCB), BOSE audio, headrests embossed with the Porsche crest and pretty much every other luxury you'd

Above One of two silver 993s currently residing at Northway



Above and right Base model 981 Boxsters and Caymans are a popular fixture of the Northway showroom

expect from Turbo S specification, this beautiful force-fed 911 is sure to please its next owner by way of near 530bhp.

IN THE MIX

Between these two very different Porsches reside the cars pictured on these pages. First up is a 2014 Sapphire Blue 981 Cayman GTS offered at £44,000. Kitted-out with PDK transmission, Porsche Sports Exhaust (PSE), front and rear parking sensors, electrically operated folding mirrors, twenty-inch wheels, Sport Chrono and black leather with matching Alcantara, this stunning two-seater boasts one owner from new.

Next up is a 2008 second-generation 997 Carrera S finished in Guards Red over black and pitched at £33,000. Another PDK car, this 3.8-litre coupe is equipped with cruise control, heated and vented seats, BOSE audio, cruise control, nineteen-inch wheels and Porsche Active Suspension Management (PASM). The registered ninety thousand miles should be of no concern whatsoever, considering how well vetted and prepared RSJ's sales cars are.

Of all the company's showroom dwellers, the 2014 Racing Yellow 981 Cayman 2.7 in attendance did the best job of catching our eye. Featuring a wealth of individual equipment not limited to heated seats, Alcantara trim, twenty-inch wheels, rear parking sensors, colour-coded seat belts, and with just thirty-five thousand miles covered from new, this eye-popping Porsche is yours for dead-on thirty grand.

Need something a tad more practical than a two-door, two-seater sports car? How about an immaculate 2017 Macan S? Finished in Rhodium Silver and powered by a 340bhp three-litre petrol engine, this gorgeous cargo carrier comes complete with ride height control, cruise control, heated seats, embossed headrests, a multi-function steering wheel, panoramic roof, power tailgate, front and rear parking sensors, a reversing camera, twenty-inch wheels, red seat belts, PASM and — you guessed it — a PDK gearbox. On sale for £32,000, this superb load lugger is sure to find a new owner without delay.

Other cars currently in the RSJ line-up include a 718 Boxster S (£43,000), 991 Carrera GTS (£67,000), 997 Carrera 4S Cabriolet (£42,000), 718 Boxster 2.0 (£35,000) and a 987 Cayman 2.9 (£28,000). If you're interested in any of the cars pictured on these pages, or would like to know more about RSJ's buying and selling practices, visit *rsjsportscars.co.uk*. ●

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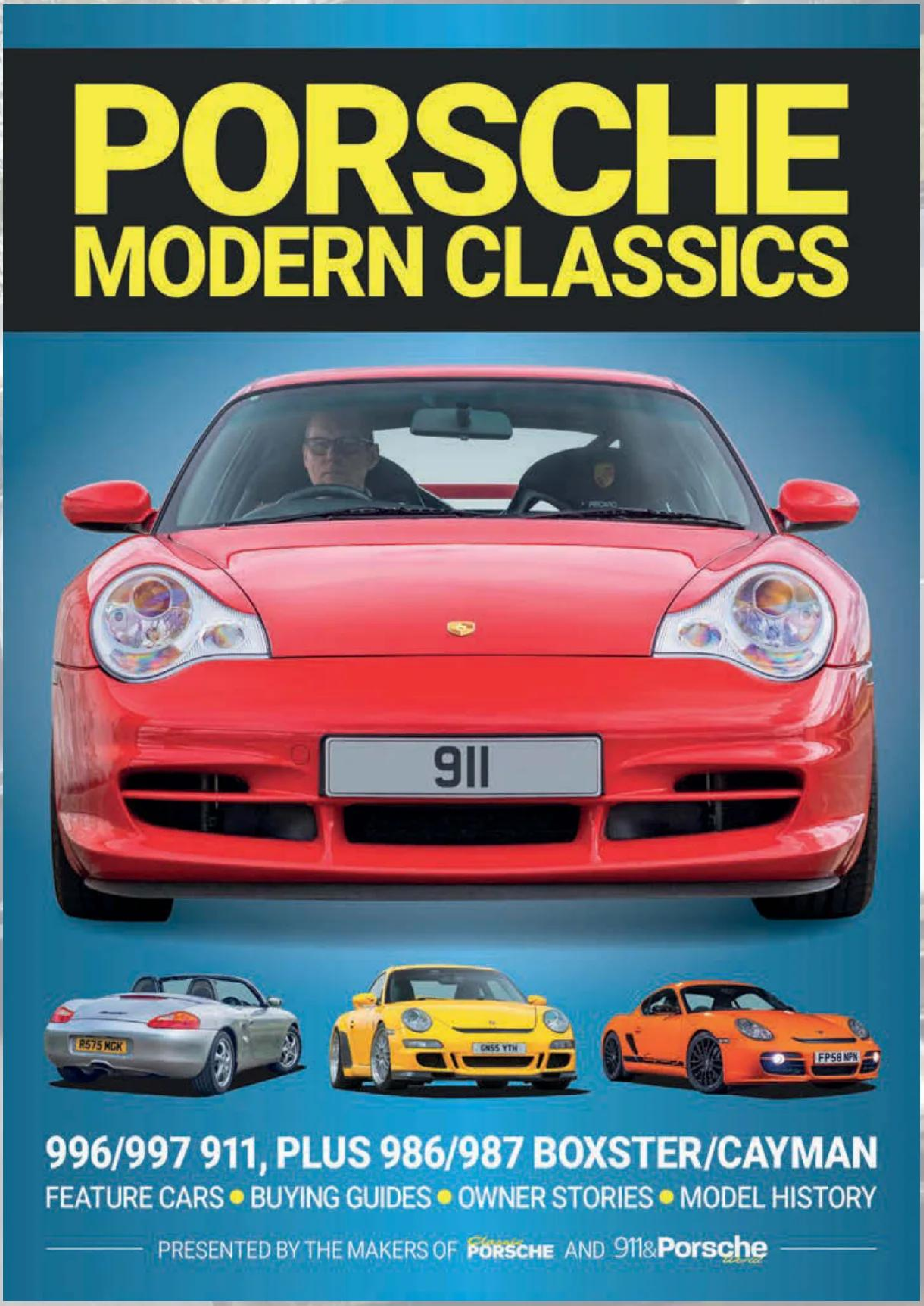

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CARS FOR SALE

PORSCHE 924

1986, 37000 miles, £9,750. A very smart Porsche 924 S finished in Guards Red with Teledial alloy wheels. It has the 2.5-litre engine and a five-speed manual gearbox. It has immaculate black leatherette and flannel cloth upholstery. There are some cracks on the top of the dash panel - a common 924 issue. The rest of the interior is in very good condition and everything works as it should, including the radio with electric aerial, and the sunroof has recently been sorted so it works perfectly. The car has also recently had a new battery and alternator, as well recent oil service. It's a 1986 car that was delivered new from AFN Porsche in Guildford to its first owner. Please call 07768372440, Scotland.

124470

PORSCHE 356

£130,000. B T6 Coupe 1600S. This car was originally sold in the USA in January 1963, it was then in Canada for a period of time before being imported to the Netherlands, from where it was purchased to commence its extensive restoration. The focus of the restoration was originality, the car is presented in 'oslo' blue (bare metal respray) with the interior trimmed in the 'factory option' red leather to give a truly stunning colour combination. Please call 07967 260673, East Midlands. (T)

124072

PORSCHE 996 TURBO

2002, 108000 miles, £25,000. £30k spent during my 5 years of ownership, £18k this year alone. New suspension, steering column and rack, tyres, screen etc etc. Still requires a couple of jobs to make it tip top. Drives beautifully. Please call 07872317195, Greater London.

124861

PORSCHE 911T

1973, £134,995. Meticulously maintained and always garaged. Completely restored in California in 2014 covering around minimal since. Finished in its original colour combination of classic Aubergine with beautiful Beige interior and removable Black targa top. Porsche COA on file. Fitted with many rare options. Please call 01765 609798, Yorkshire and the Humber. (T)

124071

PORSCHE 911

1980, £87,500. As brand new. Everything done top to bottom. Super Carrera G series. UK registered all matching numbers. Please call 07860744358, South East.

124789

PORSCHE 911

1987, 48033 miles, £89,999. A highly original 1988 Porsche 911 Carrera 2, boasting a desirable factory specification. This Porsche 911 Carrera Super Sport Cabriolet is a highly collectible open-top performance car, combining its soulful air-cooled flat-six with an involving G50 transmission and the Turbo's bodywork, suspension, brakes, and spoiler. Having covered a modest 48,033 miles at the hands of just four owners from new, this example would make a fantastic addition to any collection as well as a stylish and involving weekend cruiser for any marque enthusiast. Please call 07999222999, Wales. (T)

123711

PORSCHE 911

2004, 55,000 miles, £47,995. First registered May 2004 (04 Reg) this Porsche 911 (996) Turbo Cabriolet is a factory X50 pack car (comprising of larger turbos and intercoolers) which provided a further 39 bhp over the standard 415 bhp output, with the PCCB Ceramic Brake option this is for all intents and purposes an "S" specification car. Beautifully presented in Arctic Silver with a Black Leather interior; this six speed Manual transmission example enjoys many factory optional features including: Turbo II wheels, Wind deflector, Xenon lights, Bose Sound package, Heated Seats, Cruise Control, Parking Aid, PCM 2 Telephone and Aluminium Console. Please call 01798 874 477, South East. (T)

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PORSCHE 911 996 CARRERA 4

2002, 73000 miles, £16,990. Finished in basalt black with contrasting graphite grey leather upholstery. Last owned for the past 11 years the previous keeper had the vehicle in dry storage and used purely on occasional weekend 911 club drives. The vehicle comes with the certificate of authenticity from Porsche UK also. www.kccarsales.co.uk. Please call 01322226766, South East.

122959

PORSCHE 911

2005, 22000 miles, £35,000. 996 carrera 4S Tiptronic one owner from new, seal grey, midnight blue leather interior, PSM, 18" turbo wheels with mitchelin tyres, switchable sports exhaust, full service history. An outstanding 911 which are appreciating in value making it a great solid investment. Please call 07973760534, South East.

124438

PORSCHE 911

2006, 117000 miles, £19,000. C2 997, manual. Fabulous car in great condition. No issues, ready to enjoy. Please call 07900374300, East Midlands.

122762

PORSCHE 911

2004, £36,950. Turbo X50 (450 BHP) Cabriolet Tiptronic S with 4 wheel drive. Metallic Basalt Black with Black full leather interior and Black mohair power roof. Permanent All Wheel Drive, twin turbo fitted with the desirable X50 'Performance Kit for Turbo' delivering circa 450 BHP, Tiptronic gearbox with the optional steering wheel buttons, 18 inch factory alloy wheels, plus other extras. Really superb condition. ULEZ compliant. Please call 01277365415, East of England. (T)

124070

PORSCHE 911

1983, 8655 miles, £99,999. The 'Holy Grail', for any British Porsche enthusiast, is a sub-10,000 mile low-production C16 car. Fully matching number Porsche 911. The odometer displays an incredible 8,653 miles from new. Please call 07999222999, Wales. (T)

123710

PORSCHE 911

2019, 27,000 miles, £79,995,00. Porsche 992 C2S for sale finished in Crayon with Crayon seats. Fabulous example with extended Porsche warranty. Specification as follows. Heated seats, heated steering wheel, sports chrono package, BOSE sound system, Sports exhaust system, 20 / 21 inch classic alloy wheels, light design, adaptive cruise control. We offer great rates of finance and welcome any part exchange. For more information please call Rob. Please call 07730979259, East of England.

PORSCHE 911

1984, 208000 miles, £32,500. Bright Red 3.2 911 Carrera, Left Hand Drive. MOT till April 2025. Previous owner was the editor of Porsche World. Please call 07871924318, East of England.

122960

PORSCHE 993

1996, £85,000. 3.6 litre twin turbo 6 speed gearbox, full cage bucket seat air jack system BBS wheels and spare set. Wide body road race car includes V5. Please call 07860379440, East of England.

125135

PORSCHE 996

2000, 16246 miles, £29,999. An original right-hand drive 'C16'-code UK-market car. More usable all year round thanks to the hard top and all-wheel-drive system, this Porsche 996 Carrera 4 Cabriolet is a wonderfully capable sports car. Finished in the lesser-seen hue of Paladio Metallic and presented in excellent overall condition. Please call 07999222999, Wales. (T)

123709

PORSCHE 996

1999, 145000 miles, £10,000. 3.4 Carrera 4, FSH, bore scored symptoms hence priced at £10kovno as it is. Has MOT and comes with 2 keys, additional Clifford Security. Full clean bill of health on the instrument panel with no loss of power at all. Plenty of factory options including xenon's, sunroof, rear wiper, etc, confirmed by the buildsheet. Lots of time and money spent maintaining this vehicle with stacks of receipts available in a folder. Lots of car here for a reasonable price. Ideally looking for a cash sale due to reducing fleet. Please call 07989961039, East Midlands.

122153

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PORSCHE BOXSTER

2001, 109500 miles, £5,500. Sadly it's time to let my much cherished 986 s go to a new home after almost 8 years of ownership. The colour is Lapis blue metallic complimented by Boxster red leather interior and hood in Fulham red. It comes with a 2 inch thick folder of every receipt since new and has a very good history, last serviced at 104,500 miles. Next MOT due 4.4.25. The private plate T11 EPB will go with the car (THE PB). Tyres are excellent Kuhmos and still have the checker flag imprint on the tread. A new clutch and flywheel were fitted at 106,500 miles and new genuine Porsche front springs fitted a couple of weeks ago along with new rear brake pads and new wear sensors on each corner. Just before lockdown I was about to have a new red hood fitted with a glass rear window but that didn't happen so in lockdown madness I dyed the hood myself, it's the one thing I would get done if I were keeping the car. Please call 07469713341, North East.

124233

PORSCHE BOXSTER 2.7

2005, 75000 miles, £10,995. With blue paintwork and tan interior, sports exhaust, recent service, full mot, genuinely immaculate condition. Please call 07500714593, Scotland.

123115

PORSCHE BOXSTER

2003, 82000 miles, £6,950. Arctic Silver paintwork, blue hood, leather seats, Porsche crest on seats, 18 inch Carrera wheels, 4 new P1 Pirelli tyres, polished new exhaust. Please call 07923105828, East Midlands.

122859

PORSCHE BOXSTER 987

2005, 67000 miles, £10,795. 2.7 5 speed manual, 67K with full main dealer and specialist service history. Arctic metallic silver with black leather partial electric heated seats. Bi Xenon lights, Sat Nav, Bose sound system, 19" Carrera "s" alloys in excellent condition, multi function steering wheel, wind deflector. Recent service and brake fluid change hence next service not due until March 2026, MOT till 23 August with no advisories. Please call 07845298551, North West.

122776

PORSCHE BOXSTER

2001, 47500 miles, £10,000. Porsche 986 (black on black spec) Boxster with a 2.7L engine. Beautiful low mileage example in excellent condition all round. Tasteful upgrades include clear facelift headlights, 18" 996 turbo twist alloy wheels (unmarked) wrapped in new Michelin Pilot Sport 2 tyres and a Blaupunkt retro look head unit with bluetooth. Full service history and at 37,000 miles the clutch was replaced along with an upgraded LN Engineering IMS bearing. The Rear Main Seal was also done at the same time. 5 owners. Next MOT due May 2025. Please call 07834156681, South East.

124738

PORSCHE BOXSTER

2003, 51150 miles, £10,450. 3.2s-260BHP. Full history. All original. Last main service at 50k. Recent wheel refurb. Summer use only, garaged in winter. VGC in and out. Hard top and stand included. Please call 07530773273, Scotland.

123409

PORSCHE BOXSTER 987

2008, 44400 miles, £10,500. 2687 cc. Sport edition, 6spd. Blue. Sports seats. Bose audio. New blue hood 2017. Excellent condition with FSH. MOT October 2024. Private sale. Please call +447939528614 or 01603400971, East of England.

123261

PORSCHE TAYCAN

2023, 12,000 miles, £79,995,00. Porsche Taycan GTS Sport Turismo for sale finished in Basalt Black with GTS interior package. Great specification as follows. Carbon interior package, 14 way electric heated memory seats, panoramic glass sunroof, BOSE sound system, electric folding mirrors, top view parking camera, Carmine red seat belts, gloss black alloy wheels, light design package, GTS package, 5 seats, privacy glass. We welcome any part exchange. If you would like more information please call Rob on 07730979259, East of England.

PORSCHE CAYENNE

2012, 80000 miles, £16,500. Here we have a very rare black Porsche Cayenne S that drives absolutely as new. Extremely good on fuel, just been used in a music video. Full service history, no oil leaks, lovely body work, pleasure to drive, sunroof, electric tail gate, no warning lights on the dash, SAT NAV. HPI clear and ULEZ Compliant. Please call 07355417118, South East. (T)

123263

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PORSCHE REGISTRATION NUMBER

£10,000. 718 F. Ideal personalised registration for owners of 718-generation Boxster/Caymans or vintage 718 race cars. Available for immediate transfer to new owner. Please call 07828 260172, East of England.

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PORSCHE REGISTRATION NUMBER

1966, £600. MOY 3D personal registration currently on retention certificate ready for immediate transfer. Please call 07967024311, South East.

123260

PORSCHE REGISTRATION NUMBER

1991, £1,800. X60 JOE currently on retention certificate ready for immediate transfer. Please call 07967024311, South East.

123259

PORSCHE 911 997 CAYMAN CAYENNE STEREO

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ADVERTISEMENT INDEX

2911	2
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Beverly Hills Car Club	30
Brey Krause Manufacturing	4
Car Cover Shop	111
Charles Ivey (Specialist Cars)	103
Christopher Ward (London)	13
Classicline Insurance	119
CMS Porsche	106
Dansk	65
Dave The Trimmer	107
Design 911	33, 115
EBS Co	71
Elephant Racing	37
EPS Vertex Automotive	89, 107
Fabspeed Motorsport	21
Harbour Cars	101
Hartech Automotive	8, 85
Hillcrest Specialist Cars	107
IPD Plenums	47
Jasmine PorschaLink	111
Jaz	101
Kelsey Christmas Portfolio	121
Kelsey Christmas Products	125
Lapland Ice Driving	23
LN Engineering	92
M&A Coachworks	53
MCS	79
Motul UK	48
Ninemeister	9
Northway Porsche Specialists	32
Paragon GB	17
Parr Garage	131
Pat Mead Designs	32
Patrick Motorsports	103
Pelican Parts	45
Porsche Club GB	119
Porsche Torque	92
Portiacraft	103
Porschtek	57
Quorn Sports & Classics	111
Rennline	27
Richbrook International	106, 107
Road & Race Restorations	8
RoadSpy	28
Roger Bray Restoration	28
RSJ Sports Cars	61
RSRNurburg	41
Seacoast Specialist Cars	93
Sportwagen Eckert	97
Stoddard	25
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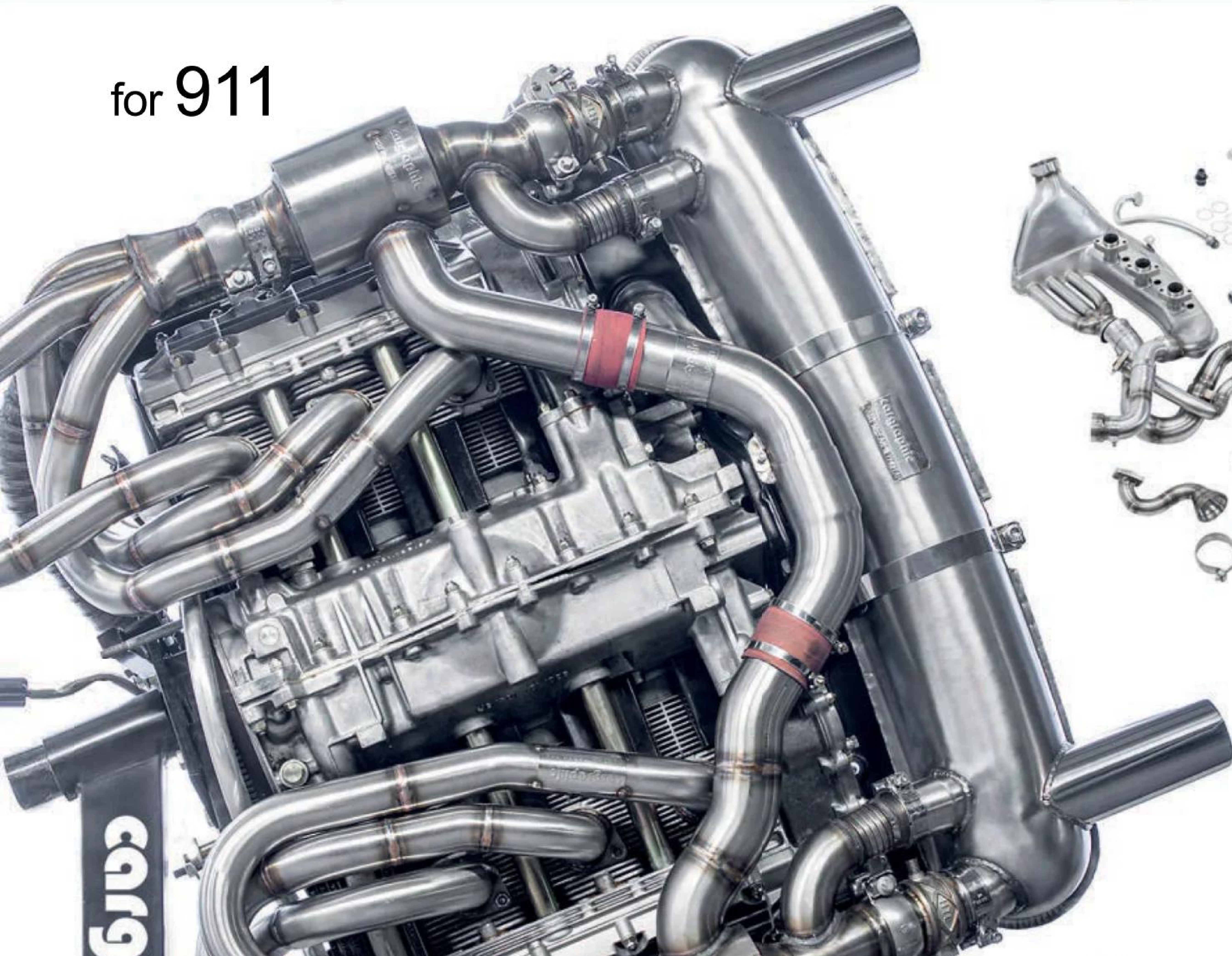

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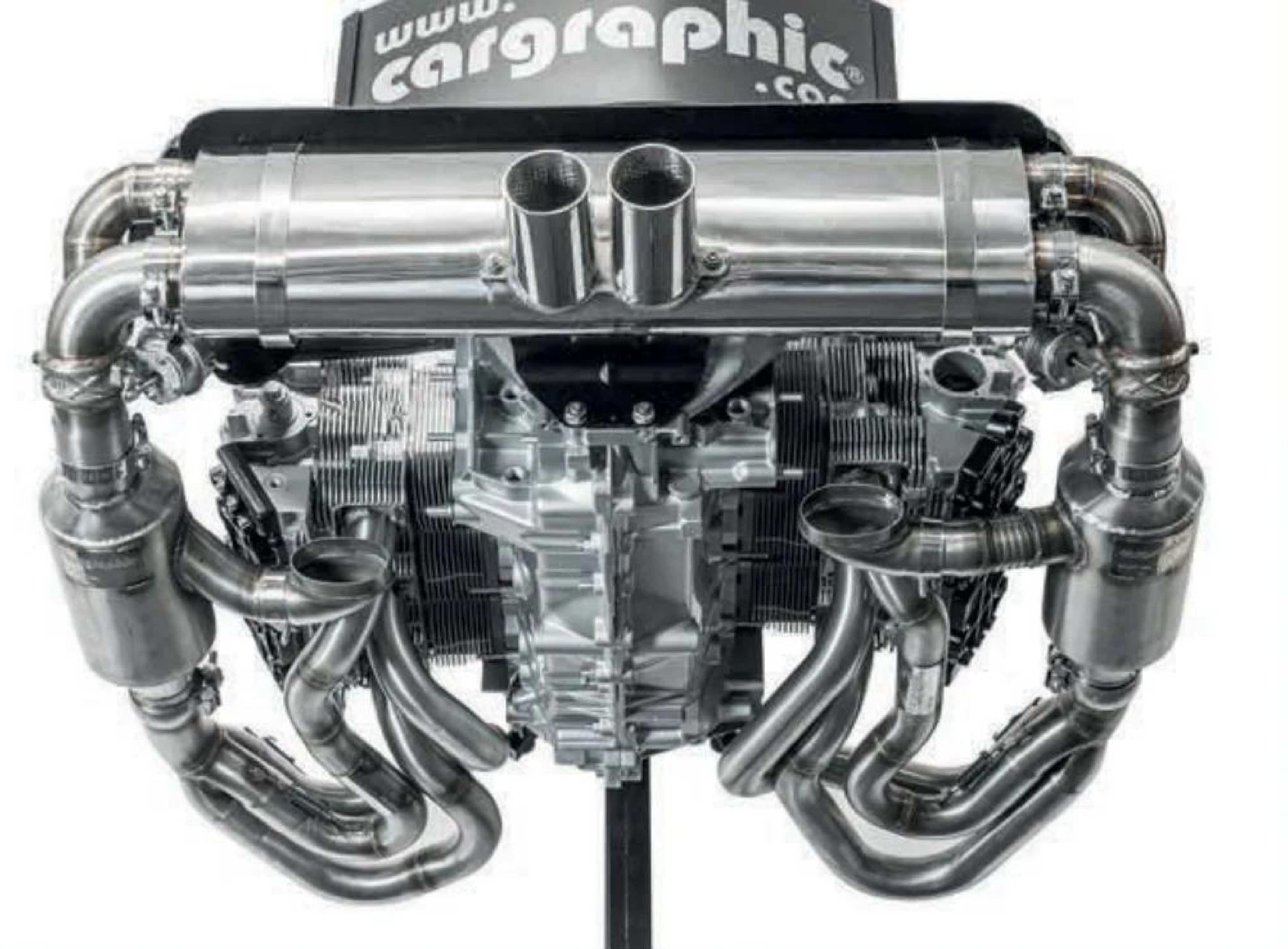

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